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# DARING SEA WARRIOR

FRANKLIN BUCHANAN

*by* GEORGE FIELDING ELIOT

author of SYLVANUS THAYER OF WEST POINT

At the outbreak of the Civil War, Franklin Buchanan, one of America's foremost naval heroes, was caught in an overwhelming dilemma. Should he side with the country to which he had given so many years of distinguished naval service, or should he take up arms for his native state which was seceding from the Union to join the Confederacy? Franklin Buchanan's decision led to one of the most heroic one-man battle campaigns in the saga of American naval warfare, and in defense of a hopeless cause.

He entered the navy at the age of fourteen as a midshipman, and rose through the ranks to become the first Superintendent of the United States Naval Academy at Annapolis. His efficient administration set a glorious precedent for coveted naval tradition. He was a man of indomitable spirit, with an unquenchable zest for action in the service of his country. This heroic quality drove him back to the sea where he distinguished himself in the Mexican War. It was his revolutionary idea to train sailors in land warfare that helped bring the war to an early end.

When Commodore Perry was sent to Japan to negotiate trade relations with that country, he chose Franklin Buchanan as his most trusted assistant. Together they changed the course of world history and the attitudes of a heretofore hostile nation.

During the Civil War, when Buchanan allied himself with the Confederate cause, he followed the path of his duty as he saw it. For this act, his name was stricken from the rolls of the United States Navy.

In recent years, the navy which he served so long has honored the memory of one of its most daring sea warriors by naming three ships after him, the latest in 1962, a brand new guided missile destroyer.

*Jacket by* JULES GOTLIEB









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Books by George Fielding Eliot

SYLVANUS THAYER OF WEST POINT

DARING SEA WARRIOR  
Franklin Buchanan

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DARING SEA WARRIOR

*Franklin Buchanan*

by

George Fielding Eliot



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To Rear Admiral E. M. Eller, U.S.N. Ret.,  
Director of Naval History, with deep  
appreciation of his ever-generous help  
in the writing of this book

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# 1                      Fighting Isn't Everything

FRANKLIN BUCHANAN TROTTED UP THE FRONT STEPS OF THE neat two-story brick house in Philadelphia where he lived with his widowed mother, two elder brothers and four sisters. He scraped the snow from his shoes and opened the door without making any more noise than he had to. He wasn't exactly sneaking into the house, but he did hope he would be able to change his torn pantaloons and wash the dried blood off his face before his mother caught sight of him. She hated to have him get into a fight—and he'd tried hard, only this time—

He was halfway across the hall, headed for the stairs, when she came quietly through the door of the east parlor.

"Franklin," she said.

"Yes, Mother."

"You've been fighting again."

"Yes, Mother."

"With whom?"

"Henry Talcott and his brother Sam."

"Why, Henry Talcott's almost a grown man!"

"He's big for his age," said Franklin. "He's only sixteen, 'n' Sam's two years younger: just my age."

"You mean you were fighting with both of those boys at once?"

"Yes'm. I had to. They said Captain Stephen Decatur was

a coward and hauled down his flag to the British. I'm as good as in the Navy myself! I couldn't stand there and hear 'em say a wicked lie like that about Captain Decatur, could I, Mother? So I pitched into 'em and made 'em take it back. Leastways I made Henry take it back; Sam ran off."

"And now you feel real proud, don't you, Franklin?" his mother asked. Franklin couldn't bear to look right at his beautiful mother; he knew the hurt would be showing in her big dark eyes. He looked down at the polished floor and muttered that he couldn't help it.

"Go make yourself as presentable as you can, Franklin," his mother told him. "Then come to my sitting room. I have a letter that concerns you and something to say to you, too."

Mrs. Laetitia McKean Buchanan was as noted for her gentle spirit as for her beauty, but once in a long while she could get her dander up. Franklin had a feeling he wasn't going to enjoy what she promised to say to him. While he was washing and changing, he kept worrying about the letter, too. Surely the Secretary of the Navy couldn't have decided not to appoint him a midshipman after all—not after Grandfather McKean had been all the way to Washington about it, and the Secretary had promised! That had been way back last October, after the British fleet had been beaten off from Baltimore and everybody had started singing a song called "The Star-Spangled Banner" that had been written during the battle by Mr. Francis Scott Key.

Franklin was Baltimore-born and fiercely proud of the fact, though his family had lived in Philadelphia ever since his father died seven years ago. For three generations the Buchanan family had been one of considerable distinction in Baltimore. Dr. George Buchanan, Franklin's father, had studied medicine at the University of Pennsylvania, and finished his medical education in Edinburgh and Paris. At the age of forty-three his warm interest in humanitarian problems had led him to accept a post as port health officer

for the city of Philadelphia, his duty to examine all ships passing up the Delaware River from foreign ports for contagious disease among their crews and passengers. Two years later, in 1808, he had died of yellow fever contracted in the course of these duties. He had left his family reasonably well off financially, especially as Mrs. Buchanan had considerable money in her own right.

Franklin took all that for granted; what was a lot harder was getting used to not having a father to turn to in boyhood troubles. He had uncles and cousins in Baltimore, and went there to visit as often as he could. He wished his mother would move back there, where he felt more at home than in strait-laced Philadelphia. His father had been in the habit of saying, "I'm George Buchanan of the Baltimore Buchanans," and that was the way Franklin felt too.

When the news came about the British bombarding Baltimore, Franklin had boiled over. He besieged his grandfather to get him into the Navy, right now, quick, until that kindly old gentleman had thrown up his hands in surrender. Grandfather Thomas McKean was a great man. He was a signer of the Declaration of Independence and had been three times governor of Pennsylvania. When he set out to do something, it had a way of getting done. Hadn't he gotten brother George a commission in a Pennsylvania regiment, and brother McKean (two years older than Franklin) a nice job in the Navy yard? But even Grandfather McKean couldn't keep the war going. It had been dragging on since 1812, and now here it was January of 1815, and people were tired of war, and there was a lot of silly talk about peace. Franklin's secret worry was that the war would be over before he got his chance to fight the British. Maybe that was what the letter was about.

Franklin looked himself over carefully in the mirror.

He wasn't exactly "big for his age," as he'd said of Henry Talcott. Just the same, he was a sturdily built boy for fourteen—all muscle and no blubber, as he was fond of saying.

Too fond, his mother had told him more than once. He had a round face, with a high healthy color that came from spending every minute outdoors that he could manage, winter or summer: fishing, skating, sailing small boats. He had even gone down Chesapeake Bay with the oyster smacks three or four times before the British blockaders had gotten so pesky that the oyster trade was pretty nigh dead. Two bright blue eyes, wide set, looked out from either side of a high, thinly arched nose; unfortunately, at the moment, one of those eyes was surrounded by a greenish purple blotch. He had scrubbed himself thoroughly and changed into clean things, and the bleeding from his cut lip had stopped; but there wasn't much he could do about that eye. He ran a comb through his soft brown hair, reflecting with momentary satisfaction on the much worse condition in which he had sent Henry Talcott home. Then he marched along the upper hall to the door of his mother's sitting room, knocked once and went in as was the family custom.

His mother was in her favorite chair, by the window that looked out on the garden. The fading January daylight was almost gone; a candle burned on the mahogany table next to her chair.

"Sit over there, Franklin, where I can't see that terrible eye so clearly," she bade him.

This is going to be bad, Franklin told himself.

"Your grandfather McKean was here a little while ago," she went on. "He was disappointed not to find you at home. He had some news for you."

Franklin ran his tongue over his swollen lip. He didn't dare ask any questions. He just waited. It must be something important. Grandfather McKean was past eighty now and not as spry as he used to be; he wouldn't come visiting on a cold day like this for any trifling reason.

Mrs. Buchanan picked up a folded square of white paper that lay beside the candle. "Your grandfather has received this for you from the Secretary of the Navy," she said. "It is

a letter notifying you that you have been appointed a midshipman, and saying that when you have accepted the appointment in due form, you will be ordered to a ship."

Franklin bounced to his feet, hot with quick excitement. "Oh, Mother, how glorious! Can I see it?"

His mother looked at him steadily. "All in good time, son Franklin," she cautioned.

"But Mother—if I hurry off my acceptance, I might be in time to get to sea with Captain Biddle! He's in New York in the *Hornet* sloop-of-war, waiting his chance to run the blockade like Captain Decatur did in the *President* two weeks ago. Everybody in Philadelphia knows Captain Jim Biddle, Mother. You'd feel better if—"

"Franklin!"

"Yes'm." Franklin sat down again.

"You trouble me deeply," his mother told him. "You make idols of these reckless young sea-captains. Tell me why?"

"Because they're fighting the British, Mother!"

"And that's why you want to be in the Navy? Just to fight the British? Think carefully before you answer me, Franklin."

Something in her voice warned Franklin he would do well to think carefully indeed about what he said next.

"I—I don't think it's just that, Mother," he said slowly. "Seems like I've always wanted to be in the Navy, ever since I can remember. If there's fighting to do, I want to be in it. But, of course, the war'll be over some time—people are talking about peace already—and when it is over I still want to be in the Navy."

"Then, son Franklin," his mother said quietly, "you are going to have to learn to curb your temper. When a war's going on and there's an enemy to fight, there's an outlet for the animal spirits in young men. In peacetime, those spirits have to be kept under control by will power, strengthened by God's grace. That's true of everyone, Franklin; it's especially so in the Navy when a lot of energetic youngsters are cooped up together day after day in a ship. And it's most

especially so with a boy who has a temper like yours, Franklin."

"Lots of Navy people have hot tempers, Mother," Franklin protested. "There's Captain Perry, for instance, and Captain Decatur—"

"I don't know about Captain Perry," she cut in, "but since you mention Captain Decatur, you'd better understand that you flew into a rage this afternoon and beat another boy for doing no more than telling the truth about what happened to Captain Decatur."

"The truth!" gasped Franklin.

"When your grandfather McKean was here," Mrs. Buchanan said, "he told me that a post-rider had just arrived from New York with news that Captain Decatur's ship was captured by a British squadron a week ago. No doubt the word's all over town. Among others, Henry Talcott must have heard it. You didn't wait to ask questions, Franklin. You just flew at him with your fists and beat him till he said it wasn't so after all—as though that made it any less so."

"I don't believe it!" Franklin cried passionately. "I don't care what any stupid post-rider says! Captain Decatur would die before he'd surrender!"

"Your grandfather," his mother went on, "tells me that the news was brought into New York by a privateer captain of some reputation, who states that Captain Decatur was overtaken by a British squadron of four ships. He fought as hard as he could for hours and hours. No doubt he gave up because there was nothing to hope for from going on fighting. There are times, son Franklin, when to go on fighting doesn't do any good."

"What good does it do to surrender?" Franklin demanded.

"Captain Decatur may have thought it did some good to save the lives of his sailors rather than have them be killed for nothing," Mrs. Buchanan answered.

Franklin gulped. Under his mother's steady eyes he tried twice to get words out before they came. "I—I suppose you

might be right," he admitted. "Four to one's pretty heavy odds—and maybe he'd lost a mast and couldn't get away—" He blinked hard, miserably aware that tears were running down his cheeks.

"I'm sure I don't need to suggest to a Maryland-born young gentleman that a most humble apology to the Talcott boys is in order," said Mrs. Buchanan. "Perhaps you will want to call at their house after supper."

"Yes'm," muttered Franklin. That prospect was almost worse than having to think about Captain Decatur striking his flag.

"Very well," said his mother. "Now about this letter from the Secretary of the Navy, to which a reply must be made. Your grandfather tells me that my written consent is required, to accompany your acceptance of the appointment."

"Mother! You wouldn't—"

"Just let me finish, Franklin. I'll give my consent on one condition only. You must promise me on your word of honor that from this moment on you will control your awful temper. Will you promise that, Franklin?"

Franklin wanted desperately to cry, "Yes, Mother, of course I will!" but he knew that wouldn't be quite honest.

"Mother," he said, "I'll promise to try my best, and I'll pray the Lord every night to help me. Is that enough?"

His mother smiled. "You're a good boy, for all your temper, Franklin," she said. "You wouldn't promise me more than you thought you could live up to, not even to get your heart's desire. Yes, Franklin. The promise you've given me is enough—with one thing added. You must promise me faithfully that you will never fight a duel, that you will never challenge anyone to a duel or accept a challenge yourself."

Franklin was startled. He hadn't thought much about duels. "You haven't ever really wanted me to join the Navy, Mother," he said. "I've known that all along. Is it because you're afraid I might get hurt, or killed, in a duel?"

"Not altogether," she admitted. "It's because you'll be

away from home so much. Also you may lose your life in a shipwreck, or in battle. But I don't think I could bear to have you killed in a silly quarrel over what is miscalled a point of honor—or come home to me with the blood of a shipmate on your soul. Franklin, you're still a boy. You lost your temper with another boy only this afternoon. You settled that your own way, a boy's way—with your fists. No real harm was done. When you put on the Navy uniform and become a midshipman, you are transformed into what is known as an officer and a gentleman. You are no longer living by boys' rules, but by men's rules. By those rules, if you quarrel with another midshipman, you don't settle the matter with your fists, but with steel or lead. To my way of thinking, Franklin, dueling is no better than plain murder. That is the reason I've been so anxious about your hot-tempered ways. And that is the reason why I have made up my mind that I can't give my consent to your going into the Navy unless you can promise me you will never take part in a duel, no matter what the provocation."

"Suppose some other fellow forces a quarrel on me?" Franklin asked. "Suppose I'm challenged to fight? If I refuse, everybody'll say I'm a coward. Cowards aren't wanted in the Navy, Mother. I'd rather be dead than have all my shipmates look down on me and call me a coward."

"Are there no other opportunities for a naval officer to prove his courage except killing his friends?" demanded Mrs. Buchanan.

Franklin didn't have a real good answer to that. Also it was plain enough, from the look on his mother's face, that he wasn't ever going to have a chance to find out about the opportunities of a naval officer unless he gave her the promise she required.

So he pledged her his word that he would never fight a duel, or give or accept a challenge to one. She smiled at him again. "Here is your letter, Franklin. When you've written your acceptance, I'll add my note of consent, and in the



morning you can take the package to the post office in time to catch the morning stage for Washington City."

That night Franklin dreamed of a great battle at sea, with Midshipman Franklin Buchanan, sword in hand, leading a mob of yelling Yankee tars over the bulwarks of a British frigate and proving his courage proudly and completely so that nobody could ever question it again.

It was a dream that wasn't fated to come true, at least not at the expense of the British Navy. A week later all the church bells of Philadelphia were ringing to celebrate the great news that peace had been signed between the United States and Great Britain at Ghent, in Holland, on Christmas Eve—more than a month back. It had taken all that time for the news to come across the Atlantic.

So the war was over before Franklin Buchanan had a chance to take part in a single sea fight. His appointment as acting midshipman came along in due course, with a notice that he would receive a permanent warrant in that rank "if your commanding officer shall, after six months of actual service at sea, report favorably of your talents, character and qualifications." He was further informed that "your pay will not commence until you shall receive orders for actual service."

The orders were a long time in coming. Bitterly Franklin bemoaned his hard luck in not getting to sea in Captain Biddle's *Hornet*, which had dodged out of New York Harbor past the British blockaders late in January. Biddle harried British commerce all the way down into the South Atlantic, captured the British sloop-of-war *Penguin* in a smashing fight on March 23, escaped from a British battleship in a breathtaking chase and only learned that the war was over when he entered a Brazilian port on June 10 to take on fresh water.

How the bells rang and the cannon roared and the crowds shouted themselves hoarse when Captain Biddle came home to Philadelphia in July! Franklin yelled as wildly as anyone

that morning, but his heart was sick. He would have given his eyeteeth to have been aboard the *Hornet*—five extra months of glorious war! He came home on dragging feet, to find a letter with the Navy Department's seal which directed him, in stiff official language, to report for sea duty aboard the United States frigate *Java*, forty-four guns, Captain Oliver Hazard Perry commanding, "when the said frigate shall be prepared to sail from Baltimore, Maryland, for the Mediterranean station."

For Franklin Buchanan, the sun shone again. Sea duty at last—and under Perry, the hero of the battle of Lake Erie! And the Mediterranean Squadron too! Captain Decatur had already gone there to take command and punish the Barbary pirates of Algiers, Tunis and Tripoli for attacking American merchant ships during the late war.

That could mean fighting, and plenty of it. Franklin, packing his sea bag, told himself happily that his dream might be coming true after all.

Also the *Java* was a brand-new ship, fresh from the builder's hands. That meant she would have the best of everything. Even her name was an inspiration to high-hearted Franklin—she was named after the British frigate *Java* which had been captured by Captain William Bainbridge in the *Constitution* back in 1813 after the hardest-fought frigate action of the war. She had been so shattered by Yankee gunfire that Bainbridge had to sink her after taking off the survivors of her crew, so the new frigate had been named for her to commemorate the victory.

Franklin reported to Captain Perry at Baltimore, and in early August, 1815, received notice to join the ship at Annapolis, Maryland, at which port the *Java* would call to take on stores after her trial trip in Chesapeake Bay.

That Franklin Buchanan commenced his naval career at Annapolis seems to have a certain significance—the lovely little capital city of Maryland was fated to play a most significant part in his future life.

## Midshipman Buchanan Keeps a Promise

"ALL-L-L-L THE WATCH! STARB'D WATCH ON DECK!" THE TWITTER of bo's'n's pipes punctuated the hoarse command. Midshipman Franklin Buchanan rolled out of his canvas hammock; his bare feet, as they hit the planks, automatically adjusted to the motion of the ship and kept their owner in balance. A flickering lantern gave enough light for Franklin to see the battered copper pot in its bucket of sand, in which a hot twenty-four-pound roundshot was supposed to be buried to keep the cocoa warm—also any midshipmen's feet which might be thrust into it on bitter mornings. As usual, the pot was cold.

"Boy!" yelled Franklin. "Bear a hand here with some hot cocoa! This pot's got icicles on it."

"Yassuh, comin' right up," said a languid voice somewhere out in the steerage "country"—the passage between the two compartments in which the midshipmen of the U.S.S. *Java* were quartered.

Franklin groped for his pantaloons, left ready on the transom under his locker when he turned in at midnight after coming off watch eight hours ago. He slid into them, got into socks and shoes, splashed salt water on his face from a tin basin, put on his brass-buttoned blue jacket.

"Where's that cocoa, you Senegambian imp?"

"Right heah, suh, right heah." The colored mess-boy, whose sad lot it was to serve the needs and whims of the *Java's* eighteen midshipmen, lurched through the doorway, grabbing a stanchion to keep his balance as the ship's stern heaved aloft under the lift of a following sea. Franklin found a pannikin on the transom—the smell of the hot cocoa warmed the cockles of his heart as the boy poured. He took a long swallow.

"Ahhhhh. That's more like it!"

He munched on a piece of hard ship's bread, stowed in his jacket pocket against this need. The *Java* hadn't been long enough at sea for her biscuit-room to become infested with weevils; that would come later. The older midshipmen kept impressing on the newcomers how privileged they were to be able to eat hardtack without having to rap each piece on the table to knock the weevils out of it.

Franklin was gulping the last of his cocoa, when he heard feet clattering down the ladder from the gun deck. A midshipman charged through the door, shouldering Franklin rudely aside as he grabbed for the cocoa pot. His name was Jack Pritchard; he was the one member of the midshipmen's mess whom Franklin thoroughly disliked. He did afford Franklin some good practice in keeping his temper, though.

"I'm just on my way to relieve you, Pritchard," said Franklin mildly.

"So I didn't wait for your royal highness," snarled the other, pouring out cocoa.

Franklin said nothing more. He put on his knit cap, stepped over the high coaming and trotted up the ladder. Behind him he heard Pritchard's sneering laugh. The midshipmen's quarters were on the berth deck—in shoreside terms, two stories down. Above the berth deck was the gun deck, where the long twenty-four-pounders that were the *Java's* main armament were ranged in two rows, fifteen guns on either side of the ship. Aft, a marine sentry in white

crossbelts paced before the double mahogany doors of Captain Perry's cabin. Franklin climbed up another ladder, with daylight at the top and the whip of a chill spray-laden wind. He touched his cap at the top of the ladder, for now he was on the quarter-deck—the official domain of the captain and the officer of the watch, where lesser beings ventured only on duty, and then with due tokens of respect.

This morning, the ship was running before the wind, under topsails and to'garns—topgallant sails. The long Atlantic swells rolled up from astern and under her in majestic succession. Thick scudding gray clouds hid the sun. Lieutenant Dulany Forrest, a blond-whiskered young man whom Franklin liked because of his pleasant manners, was just taking over the watch from Mr. McCall, the second lieutenant. Franklin's station was on the quarter-deck with Forrest, as a junior officer of the watch. Two other midshipmen would also be on duty, one on the forecastle and the other in the waist, to see that orders were promptly carried out.

Lieutenant Forrest, his eye checking over the men of the watch as they took their stations, grinned cheerfully at Franklin. "Good morning, Mr. Buchanan."

"Good morning, sir."

Midshipman Alexander, a lanky Virginian, came running up the ladder and touched his cap to Forrest. "Eight bells reported to the captain, sir. Cap'n says make it so," he announced.

Forrest's eyes jerked suddenly back to Franklin. "Mr. Buchanan, where's Mr. Pritchard?"

Franklin swallowed. "I—er—I've relieved him, sir. He's below," he said, hoping this way of putting it would satisfy the easygoing Forrest.

"Eight bells hasn't struck. Boy! Lay down to the steerage and tell Mr. Pritchard I want him on the quarter-deck on the jump." It wasn't Forrest's morning to be easygoing. "Strike eight bells, quartermaster," he ordered.

The last of the four double strokes was still echoing when

Midshipman Pritchard appeared at the top of the ladder, hastily buttoning his jacket and darting a bright venomous glance at Franklin.

"Mr. Pritchard!" barked Forrest. "What d'you mean by leaving your post of duty before being properly relieved?"

"Mr. Buchanan relieved me, sir," said Pritchard.

"Don't give me that gammon, Mr. Pritchard," Forrest snapped. "You know perfectly well that you had no business to go below until Mr. Buchanan had come on deck and relieved you, and until the bell ending your watch had been struck. Reliefs don't take place in the steerage. I'll pass your name along to the first lieutenant to do watch and watch for the next week or so. That'll give you some extra practice in watchstanding, of which you seem to be in need."

"Aye, aye, sir," muttered Pritchard. His square-jawed face was congested with fury, and Franklin knew who was the object of that seething anger. It wasn't going to be fun to stand watch and watch for a whole week—four hours on and four hours off, around the clock. Pritchard had it coming, but he wasn't the sort to blame himself.

"You're likely to have a row with that fellow," Midshipman Alexander said. "He seems to think you're responsible for his trouble."

"Let him think what he likes," Franklin retorted.

"Oh, it's hogwash, of course," agreed Alexander. "As I'll tell him if he has too much to say. But he's a hothead, like all these dark-browed South Carolinians. Too bad there aren't more of us with your even disposition, Frank."

"Thanks, Nat," grinned Franklin. His even disposition! If Nat Alexander knew what it had cost him in the way of sternly applied will power to acquire that reputation! He hadn't lost his temper once in the four months he had been aboard the *Java*! And—he wasn't going to let Pritchard spoil his record.

When he came off watch at noon and ran down to the steerage to get his dinner, the happy thought that today was

Tuesday, which meant bean soup and salt pork for the steerage mess, had pushed Pritchard clear out of his mind. Bean soup and pork made the best combination in the Navy ration, a lot better than iron-hard salt beef and squashy rice, or the overboiled oatmeal porridge known as "burgoo," sweetened by black New Orleans molasses.

The mess table was in the steerage country, firmly screwed to the deck just forward of the ladder. Clamorous midshipmen were already gathered around it filling their pannikins from a steaming pot. Nat Alexander was there, and red-headed Peleg Dunham from Rhode Island, and a dozen others including Franklin's cousin, William W. McKean, who had joined the Navy at the same time he did. Jack Pritchard was there too—he should have been on deck starting to serve one of his punishment watches except for Captain Perry's standing order that midshipmen who hadn't passed their examinations were never to stand the afternoon watch (noon to 4 P.M.) on weekdays, so that time would be available for study and instruction. The aroma of bean soup mingled with the oil-stink from the lantern that swung from a hook above the table. Daylight rarely penetrated into the steerage country unless the sun was shining directly down through the hatches. Franklin dipped his pannikin into the pot, sat down on a sea chest and began ladling thick, hot, satisfying bean soup into his hungry gullet with a pewter spoon.

"Grog, gentlemen," called a cheery voice. It was chubby Midshipman Boardley, another Maryland lad who was acting as master's mate of the berth deck and so had the duty of serving out the daily rum ration—a quarter-pint for every man. This was supposed to be mixed with two parts of water, the resulting mixture being known as "grog." However, in the midshipmen's mess this latter rule was usually ignored. At home, Franklin had been allowed a glass of wine at dinner, but he had never in his life had a drink of whisky or rum. He had quickly learned, though, that the senior mid-

shipmen expected a youngster who didn't drink, not to refuse his grog ration, but to take it and pass it along.

Franklin scooped up the last spoonful of soup in his pannikin, grabbed a tin cup from the mess table and pushed his way into the crowd of noisy midships who surrounded Boardley. He meant to give his ration to Nat Alexander, toward whom he felt kindly for the compliment about his "even disposition." Just as Boardley finished pouring out the ration of dark brown Demerara rum, a hand reached over Franklin's shoulder.

"I'll take that," jeered Pritchard's voice in his ear. "Rum's too good for dirty little sneaks like you." His breath announced that he had already tossed off his own ration.

Franklin jerked up an elbow, shoving Pritchard back. Just then the ship corkscrewed to port as a huge wave rolled under her. Pritchard, staggering from Franklin's shove, lost his balance and crashed to the deck. He came up roaring and lunged at Franklin. Franklin, still hanging on to his tin cup, side-stepped and thrust out a leg. Pritchard tripped over it, slammed up against the mess table. He was considerably bigger and heavier than Franklin, but it was clear he'd had little experience in rough-and-tumble fighting.

"Better knock it off, Jack," jeered Alexander. "You're out of your class."

"Mind your own business!" yelled the infuriated Pritchard. "I'll have that rum ration or take it out of his hide!"

Well, thought Franklin, if I'm going to have to fight this wild man I'm going to need both hands, but if I set this rum down he'll grab it, and I'll be hanged if I let him have it.

"Come and get it out of my hide, then," he invited Pritchard, "'cause that's where it's going." As he spoke he lifted the cup to his own lips, meaning to put away the whole quarter-pint in one gulp; but at the first burning swallow he gasped and started coughing. The cup slipped from his fingers and rolled across the deck, spilling rum as



it went. Franklin saw Pritchard coming at him, but for the moment he was convulsed with coughing.

"Hold it!" shouted Alexander. "Grab him, Peleg!"

"Water!" gasped Franklin. "I'm on fire inside."

"Here y'are, Frank." It was his cousin Will McKean. Franklin snatched the pannikin and poured water down his burning throat. Nothing had ever felt so good.

"Thanks, Will."

Pritchard was struggling in the grip of three or four mids.

"Let him go, Nat," said Franklin. "I'm all right now, and the rum's where he won't get it."

"Just as well," snarled Pritchard. "For a moment I forgot myself. I drink only with gentlemen."

"That's a habit you must have acquired since you joined the Navy," Franklin retorted.

The dark color of congested rage drained from Pritchard's face, leaving it a sort of pasty gray.

"Mr. Buchanan," he said in a dead level voice, "I take your remark to mean that my family and my associations before I joined the Navy did not include gentlemen. I shall expect you to afford me satisfaction for that insult when we next enjoy a run on shore."

Franklin felt the old red anger boiling up inside. "I'll afford you a bellyful of satisfaction right here and now," he barked. "Come on, what are you waiting for?"

Pritchard smiled. It wasn't a pleasant smile. "You misunderstand me, Mr. Buchanan," he said. "An insult such as you have publicly offered me cannot be wiped out by fisticuffs. I mean to have your life for it."

Nobody was laughing any more. Appalled at Pritchard's words, Franklin looked from one dead serious young face to another, and then back to the sneering Pritchard. "You mean you want me to fight a duel with you," he said quietly. "I won't do it. I promised my mother never to fight a duel."

Pritchard's smile widened. "So you're a coward as well as a sneak and a toady, Mr. Buchanan," he said. "I've sus-

pected as much all along." He turned his back on Franklin.

To Franklin's horror, the other midshipmen turned away too. Not one of them would meet Franklin's eyes, except Will McKean who stood staring at him, openmouthed and looking sick. The terrible realization that it would go on being like this—day after miserable day—came upon Franklin Buchanan then, so that he wished with all his heart that he were dead.

Down through the hatches came the shrilling of a bo's'n's pipe. "Now hear this," bawled a voice. "All midshipmen and master's mates under instruction lay aft to the quarter-deck."

"Up we go!" sang out somebody. There was a great clatter of hastening feet on the ladder, with Pritchard leading the way. Franklin followed, alone, each step a separate purgatory. Nobody looked back to see if he were coming or not.

A pale sun was peering through the overcast as he came on deck. Aft, Sailing Master Mull had his sextant in his hand, which meant instruction in "shooting the sun" this afternoon. The ship seemed to be laboring a little more than during the forenoon watch. The junior of the six lieutenants, Mr. Taylor, was officer of the watch. He stood near Mull, legs apart, looking up at the sails with a small frown between his eyes.

Just as Franklin joined the group of young men gathering around the sailing master, Taylor spoke sharply: "Mr. Hunter! My respects to the captain, permission requested to shorten sail. Wind's freshening."

Hunter, a senior midshipman who was not in the instruction group, said "Aye aye, sir!" and disappeared under the hood of the ladder which led down to the captain's cabin.

Two minutes later he was back. "Captain's coming on deck, sir," he reported—and here came Captain Oliver Hazard Perry, dragging his gold-laced cocked hat down firmly on his head as the wind tugged at it. He was a young man—just thirty years old; as reward for his famous victory on

Lake Erie, he had been promoted by act of Congress to captain's rank over the heads of half the lieutenants of the Navy and all the master commandants. His boyish face, framed in brown sideburns, showed the strain of the ill-health which plagued him, but his hazel eyes were clear and bright.

"You're quite right, Mr. Taylor," he said after a single glance aloft. "The wind's getting fluky, we can have some nasty gusts. Get the to'garns off her."

"Man the to'garn clew lines!" roared Taylor through his speaking trumpet. "Lay aloft to furl to'garns! Hands to the braces!"

The deck boiled with sudden activity as the men of the watch sprang to obey. Up the rigging swarmed the sail-loosers, nimble as so many monkeys.

"Lay out and furl!" Almost a hundred and fifty feet above the deck, men were running out on the to'garn yards to furl the sails snugly to these slender spars. They looked very tiny and helpless up there against the sky.

There was a sudden change in the motion of the ship. She rolled heavily to port, recovered shuddering as spray flew high above her bows.

"Wind's shifted three points southerly, sir—"

A violent gust of wind struck the ship like the blow of a giant fist. Up aloft there was an ominous cracking noise—someone yelled, a high-pitched shriek of mortal terror. With a crash of rending timber, the main topmast broke off at its lower end and went over the side, carrying the to'garn mast and yard with it in a vast tangle of timber, cordage and canvas.

A seaman's body came hurtling down from aloft to crash on the iron breech of one of the spar-deck carronades. The body rolled away from the gun and lay very still in a crumpled heap, blood spreading over the white deck-planking. Forward, another body crashed on the gunwale of a nested boat; a third, emitting a wailing shriek, bounced off

the hammock nettings into the tangled wreckage overside and was seen no more.

"All hands shorten sail!" Captain Perry, snatching the speaking trumpet from Taylor, was taking charge. "Bring her back before the wind! Rig the top blocks and get a hawser on that wreckage! Captain of the maintop, there—how many men were on that to'garn yard?"

"Ten, sir," came the shouted reply. "Four hit the deck—the rest are over the side."

Franklin was at the rail with the other mids, staring in unbelieving horror at the mess of wreckage. The topmast, a heavy spar nearly twenty inches in diameter, was being slammed against the side of the ship by the wind and the following seas; outboard of the mast was the topsail yard, nearly as heavy, with its sail streaming out from it in tatters. An incredible intricacy of snarled cordage attached these spars to the mainmast, to each other, to smaller spars including the slender to'garn yard from which the unhappy sail-loosers had been hurled. In all this shambles, Franklin couldn't see a sign of a human being, dead or alive—

Wait. There was a body, belly down across the broken topmast, clinging there somehow with legs dangling. Loose timbers slammed against those legs. There was a faint cry, the body writhed, trying to haul itself up. Not just a body—a man, still alive—but he would be crushed to death if those two big spars ever came together, if the loose stuff in between were swept away. And that could happen any moment now.

Franklin ripped off shoes and socks, caught up the end of a coiled line, knotted a loop in it and put it over his arm. "Pay that line out as I go," he ordered the man next to him. Swinging over the side, he slid down the nearest bit of loose rigging to the broken topmast, one end of which was well out of the water, upheld by the tangle of cordage still attached to the mainmast. His bare feet were already on

the rounded surface before he realized that the man he had given that order to was Jack Pritchard—on whom his life now depended. He balanced on the swaying mast, shook the line to be sure it was running free, and ran down the mast, surefooted as a cat, knowing instinctively that if he hesitated or tried to inch along carefully he would be pitched into the sea. The mast dropped away beneath him, came up again as the seas surged along the frigate's side. By a miracle he kept his balance, managed to drop astride the mast within reach of the man who still clung to it. Somehow he also managed to get the looped rope about the other's body under the armpits and hauled it taut.

"Sway away!" he yelled, pulling the man clear as the other tried to cling where he was in unreasoning terror. The line tightened, dragging the man from the mast an instant before a rolling sea slammed the topsail yard hard against it. Franklin jerked up his left leg just in time and almost rolled off the mast. A rope's end slapped him across the face; he grabbed it, felt it tighten, stood up.

"Knot it under your arms, Frank!" That was Will McKean's voice—and there was Will, with Nat Alexander, leaning out of an open gunport in the side of the ship, just a few feet above Franklin's head. No time for knots—the mast was rolling out from under him. He braced his feet against the ship's side and swarmed up the rope, aided by hearty heaves from the others. He scrambled over the sill of the gunport and leaned against the cold muzzle of the twenty-four-pounder, trying to stand firmly upright but not quite able to manage it for a moment. He realized that he was soaking wet from head to foot, his pantaloons were in tatters, one leg was bleeding where a splinter had gouged it, his hands were raw from the harsh hemp cordage—but Will had hold of one of them and Nat of the other, pumping them as though they would never stop.

"Bravest thing I ever saw—were you crazy, Frank? How—"

"What do I have to live for?" rasped Franklin, breaking away from them. "Come on, the skipper called all hands. Let's get on deck." He lurched toward the spar-deck ladder, made his way up.

The spar deck was alive with men, laboring to clear away the wreckage that had transformed a beautiful frigate into a helpless, wallowing hulk in a half-minute. A ragged cheer went up from those who saw Franklin stagger over the hatch coaming. A surgeon's mate, crouching beside a collapsed figure, looked up and recognized Franklin.

"The lad'll be all right, thanks to you, Mr. Buchanan," he said. "Better sit there on the coaming and let me have a look at that leg."

Another hand seized Franklin's as he started to obey.

"Well done, Mr. Buchanan," said Captain Perry. "Gallantly done! I'll not forget your name when I make my report to the Navy Department. Look alive with that hawser, bullies! Lead it aft here!"

Franklin sat down on the coaming, his head spinning.

"Mr. Buchanan." He lifted his eyes wearily.

"You and I, Mr. Buchanan," said Jack Pritchard, "don't think alike about some things. But I applied a term to you which I am now prepared to eat. Whatever you are, you're no coward. I couldn't have made myself do what you just did, to save the best friend I ever had."

Franklin felt a warm glow deep within him somewhere. "Thank you, Mr. Pritchard. You're a true gentleman, and if I implied otherwise I spoke in anger and I regret it," he said.

He couldn't seem to make himself stand up, but he held out his hand. Pritchard took it in a quick, firm grip and turned away to his duties.

The sun burst through the overcast and shone brightly on the laboring frigate. It was no brighter than the sunshine of hope renewed in the heart of Franklin Buchanan. In his ears sounded his mother's words: "Are there no other op-

portunities for a naval officer to prove his courage except killing his friends?" There are, Mother; there are indeed. And I found one just when I needed it; I didn't realize what I was doing, but you guided me aright just the same.

### 3

## The Roaring Javas

MIDSHIPMAN BUCHANAN'S NAVAL EDUCATION WAS LARGELY self-directed, developing with his own growing understanding of his "need to know"; but in the beginning he owed a lot to Captain Oliver Hazard Perry. The first big lesson was the way the *Java's* crew went to work under Perry's personal leadership to repair damages. Everybody on board had a share in the job; but it was the captain who kept them all pulling together as a team until the job was done.

Other lessons were to follow—some practical, on deck or aloft in the rigging, others learned with book in hand. Captain Perry gave his personal attention to the instruction of the midshipmen, and to those who made good progress, of whom Franklin was one, he allowed the use of his own well-stocked library, especially encouraging them to read books on naval history.

Franklin was to spend the greater part of the next five years in the Mediterranean Squadron, which Captain Perry called our "school for seamen." As for preparing young midshipmen to be commissioned officers, the value of the "schooling" depended largely on how much personal attention the captains of the various ships paid to the youngsters' instruction, and it was only when Franklin had a chance to get ashore with midshipmen from some of the other ships that he realized how lucky he was to be making his first



cruise under Perry. In one hope he was disappointed, though: there was no fighting with the Barbary pirates. Captain Decatur had overawed the pirate chiefs—the Dey of Algiers, the Bey of Tunis and the Bashaw of Tripoli—into signing treaties by which they promised never again to attack American merchant vessels, gave up all the American prisoners they were holding as slaves and paid indemnity for the damage they had done to our ships while we were busy fighting the British. Decatur had gone home with the first drafts of these treaties by the time the *Java* arrived in the blue Mediterranean; Commodore John Shaw now commanded the squadron. It was under his command that five ships—frigates *United States*, *Constellation* and *Java* and two sloops-of-war—arrived off the port of Algiers in April, 1816, with the mission of obtaining from the Dey the formal ratification of Decatur's treaty.

Here Franklin Buchanan had his first practical lesson in the art of war, though it wasn't the kind of lesson he had hoped for.

The roadstead of Algiers was a busy place the morning the *Java* came to anchor off the fortified mole. The American ships weren't the firstcomers. There was a British squadron of six huge line-of-battle ships and three frigates, and two French frigates as well.

"Looks as though the Dey's holding a reception for the fleets of the world," said Peleg Dunham, who had been with Perry on Lake Erie and thought himself a naval authority.

"Maybe we'll know something now," cried Will McKean. "Here comes Captain Perry back from visiting the commodore."

Pipes twittered, the marine sentries presented arms as Captain Perry came up the side ladder and stepped on the quarter-deck, lifting his cocked hat to the colors.

"I'll have all officers mustered on the quarter-deck in fifteen minutes, if you please, Mr. MacPherson," he said to the first lieutenant, loud enough for the lads to hear. The

captain looked pleased about something—could it be the prospect of action?

“Gentlemen,” said Perry to his assembled officers a few moments later, “we’re a little late for this ball. The Limeys and the Frogs are here before us. The British Admiral, Lord Exmouth, has orders to get a treaty from the Dey promising to stop all piracy and give up every Christian slave in his domains, in default of which Lord Exmouth proposes to open fire and reduce the Dey’s fort to rubble and his fleet to matchwood, and Lord Exmouth has the gun power to do it. The Dey is not in a good mood: our consul Mr. Shaler says he’s scared to death, as well he might be. The French don’t want the British butting in here; they’re trying to get the Dey to put himself under the protection of the King of France. Shaler is trying to get him to put his seal on the final copy of our treaty. The Dey won’t do anything: hopes to play one infidel off against another, no doubt. Which brings me to *our* mission. The commodore has his orders, too. He’s sent word to the Dey that if the ratified treaty, signed and sealed, isn’t immediately forthcoming, we’ll open fire with hot shot and burn the Algerine fleet where it lies at its moorings.”

Franklin’s heart leaped. Action was coming—even if not quite what he’d hoped for.

“I’ll be glad, Mr. MacPherson,” Perry went on, “if you’ll make the necessary preparations to open fire on the Algerine fleet at daybreak tomorrow. I doubt if we’ll need to fire a shot, however. I’ll lay any man here a month’s pay that the Dey will make haste to do what we’ve demanded.”

He’s just guessing, Franklin told himself. He can’t be sure. But late that afternoon, just after he had relieved Alexander as junior officer of the deck, he saw a flutter of color in the rigging of the commodore’s ship.

“Commodore’s signaling, sir,” he sang out, telescope at eye. “Blue burgee over red-white-red pennant.”

From the cabin hatchway Captain Perry’s laugh rose high

and clear as he emerged on deck. "Good thing you didn't take me up on that bet, Mr. MacPherson," he cried. "That signal tells me the Dey has delivered the sealed treaty to the commodore."

But how *could* the captain have known?

Next day, as the castle of Algiers dropped below the horizon astern of the Tunis-bound squadron, Captain Perry was saying to the midshipmen in his forward cabin, as he often did: "Are there any questions, gentlemen?"

"Yes, sir," said Franklin. "Why were you so sure the Dey would give in about the treaty yesterday? Why would he be more scared of us than of the British, with a lot stronger fleet?"

Perry laughed. "Human nature," he said. "When you were a boy at home, Mr. Buchanan, and you misbehaved yourself on a Monday morning knowing your father was going to be away from home until Friday, the day of reckoning seemed far off and anyway something might always turn up to avert it altogether. Right? But if your father were coming home Monday afternoon, things were not so satisfactory, eh? Well, sir, Lord Exmouth is proceeding with due deliberation toward his ultimate purpose, he is still solemnly exchanging papers with the Dey, but we were the people who the Dey thought were about to have a go at him right away—this morning, to be exact. So he got rid of the clear and present danger first, as I thought he would."

"I see, sir," said Franklin admiringly, yet a little sadly.

"You're sorry the attack didn't come off, aren't you, Mr. Buchanan?" Perry demanded.

"Yes, sir," Franklin admitted.

"War isn't all fighting, Mr. Buchanan," the captain told him. "When the purposes of war can be accomplished without fighting, so much the better, so very much the better. For in war fighting must be paid for in human lives."

For the next three or four months, the *Java* was almost constantly on the move—sometimes with the squadron, some-

times alone. She visited Tunis and Tripoli, to remind the pirate chiefs of those places that they too, like the Dey of Algiers, must reckon with dire consequences if any attacks were made on American trading ships. She called at Syracuse and Palermo, in Sicily, where Franklin had his first run ashore, and in August went to Gibraltar with dispatches from Commodore Shaw for Commodore Chauncey, who was coming out in the new line-of-battle ship *Washington* to take over command of the squadron. Franklin's Yankee heart swelled with pride when he saw the big seventy-four-gun battleship with her two rows of gunports and the Stars and Stripes at the peak of her spanker gaff.

The *Java* sailed from Gibraltar to Naples in company with the *Washington*. The squadron assembled at Naples where the change of command took place. In September, the *Java* and other ships proceeded to Messina, on the famous strait of the same name between Sicily and the toe of the Italian peninsula, where they remained for several weeks enjoying the sunshine and the sight of towering Mount Etna with its smoke cloud—and, of course, the gaieties of the town. Wine was good and very cheap, the Sicilian girls were pretty and friendly. The midshipmen of the *Java*, proud of their ship and intensely proud of their young captain—who had a far more distinguished war record than any other captain in the squadron, Commodore Chauncey included—began to call themselves “the roaring Javas” and acquired a considerable swagger. As a result there were several collisions with mids from other ships, and four or five duels were fought: fortunately with no fatal results.

For Franklin Buchanan, these days at Messina were a season of strict self-discipline. He could not fight a duel because of his promise to his mother. His own messmates now accepted this as an oddity of life which in no way diminished their regard for him; but no such tolerance could be expected from others. Franklin felt a deep obligation not to expose his ship and his messmates to disgrace.

So he had to keep full control of his impulsive nature and hot temper all the time he was ashore. He found he couldn't do this if he drank more than a couple of glasses of wine at a sitting; that became his limit. Girls, too—especially the livelier ones—caused jealousy and bickering among the youngsters of the squadron; so Franklin avoided more than a passing acquaintance with girls. He couldn't help noticing that in these two matters, he wasn't following Captain Perry's example. Time and again the captain returned to the ship at a late hour, obviously somewhat unsteady; occasionally he entertained other captains in his cabin with considerable noise and revelry. Twice Franklin saw him driving through the narrow cobbled streets of Messina in the company of a bright-eyed young lady, and there were tales of gay gatherings at some of the lovely villas outside the town at which Captain Perry was reported to have been the life of the party.

Of course, there was a good deal of talk on the *Java* about the captain's goings-on. One evening Franklin overheard the gray-haired Surgeon Parsons say to Lieutenant MacPherson: "There'll be the devil to pay one of these nights if Captain Perry doesn't behave a little more carefully."

"The devil that has to be paid, my friend," answered the first lieutenant grimly, "is the restless devil that inhabits the gizzard of our good captain. Give him a war to fight—give him any prospect of action, and no better man and leader ever trod a ship's deck. Leave him to twiddle his thumbs with nothing to do and you never know in what direction he'll explode. Even just being at sea, with the hour by hour responsibility for the safety of his ship, keeps him reasonably happy. But loafing here at Messina, simply because the commodore lacks the energy or the imagination to keep the squadron usefully employed, drives our Oliver to distraction."

"I'm thinking of having a word with him," the doctor said.

"You'll get no thanks," warned MacPherson.

In the days that followed, Franklin thought a lot about what the first lieutenant had said of Captain Perry. It gave him a deep, warm fellow-feeling for his skipper. He had the same kind of troubles himself. He never knew whether Dr. Parsons had really "had a word" with the captain, but he did notice that as September gave way to October and the squadron still lingered at Messina, the captain wasn't going ashore nearly as often.

Instead, he flung himself into vigorous activity aboard ship, inventing new schemes for practicing the crew at the guns or aloft. The instruction of the midshipmen came in for increased attention from the captain, too. He engaged the services of teachers to handle classes in Spanish and French—half the midshipmen being told off to study one language and half the other. An Italian fencing master was also procured to instruct the young gentlemen in the use of the smallsword.

Even more novel to most of the midshipmen was instruction in dancing. It became popular, however, when it developed that those who met the approval of the dancing teacher were allowed to attend a series of Sunday afternoon "galas" on the spar deck to which young ladies of the best families of Messina were invited to dance with the ship's officers—under, let it be said, the watchful eyes of their respective mamas. Captain Perry was always present in person, and "tripped the light fantastic" as gaily as any midshipman.

Some of the *Java's* youngsters were inclined to resent the extra demands on their time with all these unaccustomed activities, which, except for the girl-parties, they regarded as tomfoolery. One of the commonest remarks to be heard in the steerage was "What's got into the skipper all of a sudden?" Franklin offered no opinion on that subject, but he knew the answer: the captain was working off the energy of "the restless devil that inhabits his gizzard," as Lieutenant MacPherson had put it.

At the end of October the squadron sailed for another precautionary visit to Tripoli, Tunis and Algiers, and then to Port Mahon in the Spanish island of Minorca, a favorite rendezvous for the American naval forces in the Mediterranean. In mid-January the *Java* sailed for home, arriving at Newport, Rhode Island—Captain Perry's home town, where he received a tremendous welcome—early in March. By April she was in the Boston Navy Yard, preparing to go out of commission. For Franklin Buchanan, that was bad news.

Naval officers in those days were not constantly on active duty, as they are now. When a ship went out of commission, her officers were put on the "waiting orders" list, at sharply reduced pay, and might linger ashore for months or even years before being ordered to sea duty again. Franklin wanted to stay at sea; and he had learned enough about the Navy to understand that he mustn't just take it out in wanting, he must do something about it.

So the next morning after he had heard the bad news, he marched boldly up to the marine orderly at the cabin door, and sent the man in to say that Midshipman Buchanan respectfully asked for a word with the captain.

When he was admitted, he found the captain taking coffee with a stocky young officer wearing a lieutenant's single epaulet on his left shoulder. "Let me present you to my brother Calbraith, Mr. Buchanan," the captain said. "He's been taking time out for a cruise in the merchant service, but he's coming back to us. Well, youngster, what can I do for you? Wait—let me guess. You want another ship, eh?"

"Yes, sir," said Franklin. "I hope to stay on in the Navy, so I ought to try to improve myself. Isn't sea duty the best way to do that, captain?"

"It's the only school we have for youngsters like you," Captain Perry told him. "Whether it's the best we could do, I'm not so sure. I'm afraid it's too dependent on the atten-

tion that's paid to the education of midshipmen by individual captains."

"We ought to have a regular school such as the Army has at West Point," said Lieutenant Perry in a deep, positive voice. "We could have a practice ship attached to it, to provide training in seamanship; but the whole program should be on an established basis, with a standard course of studies and young men required to measure up or get out."

"You may be right, Cal," the captain nodded. "Commodore Bainbridge, here at the Boston yard, is coming round to the idea of a naval school. But you'll never convince the blue-water people like Commodore Stewart that there's any place except a ship's deck where midshipmen can be taught their profession. All of which doesn't solve your problem, Mr. Buchanan—and speaking of Commodore Stewart, how'd you like to go back to the Mediterranean with him? He's going out this fall to take over command of the squadron."

"I'd like that just fine, sir," said Franklin. "But—won't you be going to sea again pretty soon?"

"I'm afraid not," Perry told him. "I've applied for the West Indies squadron, where there's trouble with pirates, but I can't have that billet before some time next year, if then. You couldn't be under a better eye than Charles Stewart's meanwhile. I'd suggest you write to the Secretary of the Navy asking for assignment to the *Franklin*—she's fitting out at Philadelphia to be Stewart's flagship. Her name's a good omen for you, eh? Here—sit over at my desk and I'll dictate the letter in proper form; I know the turn of phrase the Secretary likes. Then you can leave it with me and I'll forward it along with a strong recommendation, and I'll also write a private note to Stewart."

"You're very kind, sir, very kind indeed," said Franklin.

"Not a bit of it," denied Perry, smiling. "You're a promising young officer, and it's no more than my plain duty to try to keep you in the Navy and push you forward."

When the letter was finished—Franklin in his excitement



broke a swan-feather pen and blotted the paper, so he had to start over—the captain scanned it carefully, nodded and held out his hand.

“Until we meet again, Mr. Buchanan,” he said, “good-bye and the best of luck. I’m leaving the ship in an hour’s time and may not be back before you’re detached.”

“Good-bye, sir, and God bless you,” choked Franklin, barely able to get the words out for the lump that rose in his throat. He bowed politely to the captain’s brother and hurried out of the cabin hoping the captain hadn’t noticed the tears in his eyes.

He ought to have been thinking of his wonderful luck. He was going to sea again, and in a battleship—a battleship with his own name. He was going back to the blue Mediterranean, under command of an outstanding officer and sea-fighter. And first he would be going to Philadelphia, which meant seeing his mother, his brothers and sisters and his grandfather McKean, maybe spending a few weeks at home.

But all Franklin Buchanan could think of as he stumbled down the ladders to the steerage was that Captain Perry was leaving the ship—that the “roaring Javas” were disbanded forever.

## 4

## First Step Up the Ladder

AS IT HAPPENED, FRANKLIN BUCHANAN DIDN'T GET HOME TO Philadelphia until September of that year, 1817, just in time for his seventeenth birthday. He spent the summer cruising off the Atlantic coast in the brig *Prometheus*, commanded by Captain Alexander S. Wadsworth, a stern no-nonsense skipper who was charged with making surveys of coastal waters. The crew was almost entirely composed of midshipmen, who performed all the ship's duties including hollystoning the decks and standing watch as helmsmen and look-outs. The idea of this cruise—really the Navy's first practice cruise for midshipmen—originated with Commodore Bainbridge, then commanding the Boston Navy Yard; the midshipmen acquired practical experience in seamanship and a knowledge of marine surveying as well.

Franklin came back to Boston to find his orders to his namesake ship awaiting him. Three days before his birthday he ran up the well-remembered steps of his Philadelphia home to be overwhelmed by happy greetings from his mother and his two younger sisters, Elizabeth, who was blossoming into a young lady at fifteen, and Laetitia, who was going on eleven. His older sisters Mary Ann and Rebecca came over with their husbands for supper that night; brother George was living in Baltimore now, but his brother McKean

arrived hotfoot from the Navy yard where he was still clerking, happily excited to see Franklin and eager for every detail of Navy life. McKean was something of a plodder. Franklin had never thought of him as adventurous.

"Why, Mac," he grinned, "you sound as though you wanted to go to sea!"

"Sometimes I do," McKean admitted, his round face, pale from long confinement in an office, turning pink with embarrassment as his sisters began to laugh. "Sometimes when I'm sitting there on that high stool making out papers for chaps who've just come in from the Brazil station or are just shipping out for the West Indies or the coast of Africa, it seems's if I can't stomach another day of pen pushing. It isn't funny, Frank," he went on earnestly. "Look at you, brown as a berry, not a care in the world, off next month to the Mediterranean again to have a high old time! I tell you, boy, I envy you!"

"A high old time!" laughed Franklin. "That's rich. If you'd ever led the sail-loosers aloft to take a reef in a main tops'l in a gale of wind, you'd have some idea of what a midshipman gets in the way of high old times!"

Of course Franklin was swamped with questions—what was Captain Perry like, and what had Franklin had to eat (they were shocked when they found out, and urged second helpings on him anxiously), and how did he ever manage to sleep in a hammock, and what were the ladies wearing in Italy and Spain, and had he seen any veiled women in Algiers, and anyway had he met any girls he liked and so on and so on. The older girls proclaimed Franklin mighty handsome and announced their relief that he hadn't brought home a dark-eyed bride; at which Franklin snickered and inquired just how would he support a family on a midshipman's pay of nineteen dollars a month?

But Franklin read another question in his mother's anxious eyes, and after supper, when they were alone for a little while in her sitting room, he answered it before it was asked.

"I've kept my promise, Mother—about not getting mixed up in any duels, that is."

"I knew you would, Franklin," she answered. "And have you kept your temper too?"

"Not always," he owned. "But well enough to avoid serious trouble."

"You'll find it easier as you grow older," she assured him.

"I s'pose I will, Mother," he said. "Anyway I'm told Commodore Stewart's dead set against dueling, especially among midships, so maybe there won't be so much of it next commission."

"I hope not," his mother said. "It's an evil practice, the curse of our Army and Navy."

"The real curse of the Navy is the rum bottle, Mother," said Franklin firmly. "That's what starts most duels. That's what ruins good sailormen, too."

"Your grandfather McKean was saying much the same about young folks here in Philadelphia just before he passed away this spring," said Mrs. Buchanan. "I'm glad you feel so strongly about it."

Franklin's two weeks at home passed very quickly indeed. In early October, he reported aboard his new ship at Chester, a few miles down the Delaware River, where she was taking aboard her stores of salt provisions.

A battleship, Franklin was delighted to discover, had a lot more room in her than a frigate. She had two gun decks below the spar deck, each bearing a formidable battery of thirty-two-pounder guns. The midshipmen were quartered on the lower gun deck, where even the tallest of them—young Samuel Francis Du Pont of Delaware—had room to stand upright, a thing unheard of in the *Java*. But for Franklin Buchanan, the best thing about the midshipmen's quarters of the battleship *Franklin* was the sight of familiar faces—Nat Alexander's, and Will McKean's, and chubby Boardley's, all old messmates from the *Java*. Jack Pritchard, he

learned, had left the Navy, and Peleg Dunham had been promoted to lieutenant.

The *Franklin* sailed from Chester October 28, put in at Wilmington to take on powder and at Hampton Roads for her spare spars, and then called at Annapolis where Commodore Stewart joined her. From that port she sailed for the Mediterranean on November 19.

Franklin Buchanan's two and a half years in the Mediterranean on this voyage were pretty much a repetition of his previous cruise in those waters. Keeping the Barbary pirates reminded of the Navy's constant vigilance and "showing the flag" in friendly ports were the duties of the squadron.

The powerful personality of Commodore Stewart dominated the ship. He was probably the ablest all-round American naval officer of the day, and he had very definite ideas on the education and instruction of midshipmen. Franklin especially liked Stewart's system of rotating midshipmen in the various duties of the ship, so that every mid stood watch on the quarter-deck, on the forecastle and as master's mate in turn. Those who showed promise were allowed to take full charge of a watch in port and occasionally, in good weather, at sea.

Franklin would long remember the first time this happened to him. He had just come on watch as junior officer on a fine sunny afternoon, with the ship booming along in a moderate breeze. Suddenly Lieutenant Oellers, the officer of the watch, walked over to Franklin and handed him the speaking trumpet.

"Take charge of the deck, Mr. Buchanan," he said. "I'm going below for a bit. Course is sou'east by east."

It was an awesome responsibility for a lad just turned seventeen to be in full charge of a great line-of-battle ship and eight hundred men. That it had happened to Franklin meant that he was considered promising officer material by the commodore. His breast swelled with pride.

"Good afternoon, Mr. Buchanan." It was the commodore himself, his red hair flickering in the breeze under the edge of his gold-laced hat.

"Good afternoon, sir."

"Mr. Buchanan."

"Sir."

"I see you have the flying jib set."

"Yes, sir." The flying jib was a small triangular sail carried forward, above and outside of the jib—a much larger sail of the same shape.

"Should you be carrying the flying jib when the royals are not set?"

Franklin thought fast. The royals were small square sails carried on the upper part of each of the three masts. He was sure he had been taught that the royals and the flying jib should be set at the same time and taken in at the same time.

"No, sir," said Franklin. "But it was set when I relieved the deck and I have had no order to take it in."

"An alert watch officer, Mr. Buchanan, would suggest so obvious a proceeding. Get the flying jib in."

"Aye aye, sir." Desperately Franklin's mind worked to recall the necessary words as he lifted the trumpet to his mouth and bellowed the first order he had ever given for an evolution at sea. "Man the flying jib down-haul!" Up in the eyes of the ship, a dozen men leaped into sudden activity. "Let go the halyards! Haul down!" The sail started down, then something checked its progress. Franklin felt the commodore's ice-blue eyes on him. Just in time he remembered what to do. "Ease off the sheet, you lubbers!" he yelled. "You there, cap'n of the fo'c's'le, keep your wits about you! That's well. Lay out and stow the flying jib."

Several men ran out on the bowsprit to stow the flapping sail.

"Very good, Mr. Buchanan," said the commodore. "Never forget that the life of a watch officer at sea, during his tour

of duty, is made up of an infinitude of small but important details."

"Aye aye, sir," said Franklin. He was learning.

He continued to learn—and to be given increased responsibility—for the rest of his cruise in his "namesake ship."

When, on April 24, 1820, the *Franklin* dropped anchor in New York Harbor, Midshipman Franklin Buchanan went ashore with a letter of warm commendation from Commodore Stewart in his pocket and a feeling of self-reliance in his heart. There was an ache there too. It came from that gray day in the preceding October when the colors of the squadron had been lowered to half-mast in memory of the late Captain Oliver Hazard Perry, who had gone to the West Indies as he had hoped, and died there of yellow fever. It was hard for Franklin to realize that he would never see Captain Perry again.

But he was happy to go home, and to have his mother look at him with pride in her eyes and say, "Why, son Franklin, my boy has become a man grown!" It was true: he was nineteen years old, he had served his apprenticeship, he was ready for wider responsibilities. He promptly applied by letter to the Navy Department to be ordered for examination as lieutenant, and was as promptly informed that the list of candidates to be examined that year was already closed. As a sop, he received orders to duty at the Naval Station, Philadelphia, which at least kept him on the active-duty payroll. He had already heard that his brother McKean had applied for a midshipman's warrant in 1818 and was now at sea in the corvette *John Adams*, in the West Indies squadron. Franklin wasn't sure whether he quite liked that or not; to have a brother two years older than himself who was three years his junior in rank and would so remain throughout a career governed strictly by seniority could be—well, awkward.

One morning in November, 1820, when Franklin was busy penning his fifth or sixth application to the Navy De-

partment for sea duty, a lieutenant came through the door of the scrubby little office. Catching a glimpse of a gold epaulet from the corner of his eye, Franklin jumped up and said: "Good-morning-sir-what-can-I-do-for-you" before he recognized Captain Perry's younger brother, whom he had met aboard the *Java*.

"Why, if it isn't poor Ollie's young friend!" boomed Lieutenant Matthew Calbraith Perry, heartily, holding out his hand. "Glad to see you, Mr. Buchanan. I heard you had your cruise with Red Stewart."

"Thanks to your noble brother, sir," Franklin answered. "I can't tell you how grieved I was to hear of his death. A sad loss to our country."

"Indeed, indeed," said Perry. "He thought highly of you, Mr. Buchanan. What are you doing here?"

"Shore duty, sir. I'm ready for my examinations, but Lord knows when I'll be allowed to take them; so I'm trying to get the Department to find me a seagoing billet."

"You're wasting your time, I'm afraid," said Perry. "I've just been ordered to the African station as first lieutenant of the *Cyane* sloop-of-war. I find there are three or four applicants for every midshipman's billet in her."

"I wish I were going with you," said Franklin. "I can't bear being left here to rust on the shelf."

"Why don't you ask for a year's leave and do a cruise in a merchant ship?" suggested Perry. "Since you're ready for your Navy examinations, you can pass for a mate's ticket easily enough. Trade's picking up; there's a great demand for qualified ship's officers. Pay's better than the Navy, too. I tried it myself for a few years after the war. There's no better school for navigators and seamen."

"By jiminy, I'll try it too!" cried Franklin. "Anything's better than this."

"I'm joining the *Cyane* at Baltimore," Perry told him. "I've some acquaintance among shipping firms there; I'll



mention your name where it may do some good. You'll hear from me before I sail."

Franklin was grateful, but not too hopeful. Yet ten days later the promised letter arrived, advising him to get in touch with the owners of the Baltimore-built brig *Dorothea*, then preparing for a voyage to China. As a result, he sailed in her as second officer in April, 1821, bound round the Cape of Good Hope for Canton with a mixed cargo.

Franklin kept a careful journal of that voyage, which has come down to us. It is chiefly notable for the fact that it relates no unusual occurrences whatever, not even any especially bad weather. The *Dorothea* arrived at Canton in August, spent something over four months unloading her cargo and obtaining and loading a homeward-bound cargo, and after an equally uneventful homeward voyage came to anchor in the Delaware River off Philadelphia on June 11, 1822. Franklin could chalk up a sound package of nautical experience, and a quick look at Oriental ways into the bargain. His opinion of the merchant service may be guessed from the fact that he never again asked for leave to try a voyage in a trading ship.

As soon as he was paid off he hurried to the Navy yard for the latest news, and was delighted to learn that examinations for lieutenant would begin in New York October 1, 1822, before a board presided over by Commodore Bainbridge. He sat right down and penned his application and sent it off to the Department before he went along home.

Within a week he had orders to appear before the examining board, and he passed the examination with ease. It was searching enough, but his good training under Perry and Stewart and his steady application to his books paid off handsomely.

So Franklin went home to Philadelphia a "passed midshipman"—which raised his pay to twenty-five dollars a month and made him the superior of all ordinary midships while he

waited patiently for a vacancy in the lieutenant's list. The Navy Department had at last laid down regulations for the uniform of midshipmen—a blue coat with short “lappels,” six brass buttons and a diamond-shaped device of gold lace on each side of the standing collar, blue or white pantaloons and a cocked hat. As a passed midshipman, Franklin was hereafter entitled to wear a gold star in the center of the diamond-shaped device.

After seven years in the Navy, he had taken the first step up the long ladder of promotion.

## 5

Pirates, Romance and  
the Winds of Change

PASSED MIDSHIPMAN FRANKLIN BUCHANAN LOST NO TIME IN applying to the Navy Department for sea duty, and within a month had orders to report to Commodore David Porter for service with the squadron which that officer was taking to the West Indies for a great effort to wipe out the pirates who infested the Caribbean and the Strait of Florida.

Porter was given a squadron of eight small schooners, with from two to four guns and thirty-five men each, which could, as he said, "dig the rats out of their holes." Franklin was delighted when the commodore assigned him to one of these, the *Weasel*.

Franklin joined the *Weasel* at Annapolis, Maryland, where she and two of the other schooners were being fitted out for pirate-chasing. They were, indeed, Chesapeake Bay oyster-boats of a type with which Franklin had been familiar from boyhood. During this Annapolis interlude Franklin became close friends with a genial young fellow Marylander, Charles Lowndes, who had been the last midshipman to pass the recent examinations in New York. Young Mr. Lowndes was spending his off-duty hours courting Sally Lloyd, daughter of United States Senator Edward Lloyd of Maryland, and Frank-

lin had to listen to a good deal of impassioned spouting about this damsel's angelic qualities and surpassing loveliness.

The *Weasel* was commanded by Lieutenant Kennon; there were two other lieutenants and two midshipmen on board. Franklin, ranking after the lieutenants, was appointed "acting master," which raised his pay by five dollars temporarily, and gave him the duties of navigating officer. He also stood a regular turn as officer of the watch. All these young officers lived and messed together in the tiny cabin—a less restricted existence after the stern hidebound routine of frigates and battleships, even if the cabin did have only five feet of headroom.

All that summer of 1823, Porter's squadron operated along the northern coasts of Santo Domingo and Cuba, clear westward to the Yucatan Channel. It was rough work, with the officers and men half their time in the boats; but it paid off in the capture of two pirate vessels, the destruction of a dozen or so of their large rowing boats and galleys, and the burning of several of their coastal strongholds. Franklin wasn't lucky enough to take part in any of the actual fighting, but he was lucky in another way: he spent several days aboard a little steamer, the *Sea Gull*, which Commodore Porter had obtained for use in chasing pirates when sailing vessels might be becalmed. The *Sea Gull* had been designed as a ferryboat; she was round-ended, slow, overweighted with machinery, had very little room for either guns or crew, and wallowed horribly in any kind of seaway. But she did provide a gun platform that wasn't dependent on a favoring wind to get into action, and she was the first steam-propelled warship ever to open fire against an armed enemy. Franklin's imagination was stirred—why couldn't an engine be put in a more seaworthy hull, one that could carry enough coal for ocean cruising, with a good crew and plenty of guns?

"Nonsense," jeered his messmates aboard *Weasel*. "Just look at old *Sea Gull*—why, those big paddle wheels take up half her length. How do you get enough guns in a broadside

to do any real fighting? And, of course, the first thing to happen would be for your paddle wheels to be crippled by enemy fire, anyway. If the pirates were better gunners, that's what would have happened to *Sea Gull* already."

"Just the same," Franklin insisted, "steam's here to stay—we'll have a steam navy one of these days." The argument was still going on in August when the *Weasel* put into Key West to rendezvous with the rest of the squadron.

The *Sea Gull* intercepted her at the harbor entrance; Charles Lowndes, standing on a paddle box, hailed: "Heave to and send a boat—commodore's orders—there's yellow jack in the squadron!"

Yellow fever—King Death in his Yellow Robe. More than twenty officers stricken, half of them dead already, seamen and marines dying like flies, a couple of dozen buried today. Don't anchor, here are the commodore's dispatches—take 'em, they're safe, they've been fumigated with sulfur. Off you go to Norfolk as fast as you can to get help—doctors and medicines—and pray the Lord for a favoring wind. Charles Lowndes was white-faced, shaken by the horrors he had beheld and to which he must return. The *Weasel's* officers clamored at him for news of friends—this one dead, that one still alive. So off flew *Weasel* northward; the wind held fair, she made a record passage to Hampton Roads, delivered her dispatches and her cry for help—and at the dread words "yellow jack" she was slapped into quarantine for a month before one of her people could set foot on shore.

After that came leave for the *Weasel's* officers, but they were still on sea duty with the West Indies squadron, and they would be going back there in a few weeks or months. Franklin's family wasn't pleased at the prospect, and neither was Will McKean's, but that was the way of it. The *John Adams* was in the West Indies too, though Franklin had seen nothing of her; McKean Buchanan's letters announced that he was well, but finding a midshipman's life not quite as attractive as he had imagined.

Franklin's new orders came after New Year's—to the *Hornet* sloop-of-war as acting lieutenant; so many officers were dead that there weren't enough lieutenants to go around. Out of a total of twenty-five who took the yellow fever at Key West, twenty-three had died. In many a Navy mess glasses clinked to the grim old toast of the Army, likewise hidebound by seniority promotion: "To a bloody war and a sickly season—and up we go, boys!"

For seamen, the prospects of a West Indies cruise were even less attractive than for officers. The *Hornet* still lingered short-handed at Norfolk in late April when a stiff white envelope came for Franklin. The Honorable Edward Lloyd, United States Senator from Maryland, and Mrs. Lloyd requested the honor of his presence at the marriage of their daughter Sally to Passed Midshipman Charles Lowndes, United States Navy. Franklin had a little money on the purser's books. He bought a new full-dress coat for himself and a silver sweetmeat bowl for the bride, took passage up the bay to Baltimore in the regular mail packet, and posted over to Annapolis the next day, May 3, 1824, the day before the wedding and a day Franklin was to remember all his life. He went to the inn where Charles Lowndes was staying, as he had been bidden, and was received with enthusiasm by his friend:

"Your cousin Will's here already; you must both come right along and be presented to the family."

"Give me time to change," begged Franklin. He got into his new coat—a little self-conscious about the weight of the heavy gold epaulet on his left shoulder, the insignia of his acting lieutenant's appointment which neither Charles nor Will had been lucky enough to fall into. Maybe it would be in better taste to take it off. But Charles was pounding on his door yelling at him to "bear a hand," so he went along as he was.

"This won't be formal," Charles said. "Just the family—and my last look at the bride till tomorrow afternoon. Of

course, you've met Sally, Frank—you'll find her prettier than ever, I can tell you. And for you, Will, 'tis a real feast for your young eyes that awaits you."

The senator, an imposing figure in black broadcloth and snow-white stock, and the senator's lady, equally imposing in vast folds of rustling purple taffeta, received "dear Charles'" young friends graciously. They were, they said, delighted and honored that Acting Lieutenant Buchanan and Passed Midshipman McKean should have journeyed so far to grace dear Sally's wedding by their presence. This ceremonial over, Franklin and Will were taken in charge by the bride, who was indeed prettier than Franklin remembered. There was a flurry of presentations to brothers, sisters and cousins—

"And oh! Mr. Buchanan, you must let me present you to my little sister, Nannie!"

Franklin found himself looking into a pair of very large dark eyes which surveyed him gravely out of a face that seemed to be floating in the air before him like a disembodied but wholly entrancing vision.

"Nancy!" said the vision with emphasis. "I will *not* be called Nannie any longer!"

"Oh, Mr. Buchanan!" cried Sally. "You mustn't mind my little sister, you really mustn't! She's just turned sixteen, and she really shouldn't be here at all, but Mama said—"

"Mama said I was quite old enough to be a bridesmaid," interrupted the vision, "and so I'm quite old enough to be called Nancy and not any baby name like Nannie. Don't you agree with me, Mr. Buchanan?"

"I do indeed," Franklin managed to say. He discovered he was holding something—it turned out to be the vision's hand. He bowed low over it as he had been taught to do by the *Java's* dancing master. "I think, Miss Nancy," said he, "that I see a punch bowl there. If its contents meet your approval, may I have the privilege of bringing you some refreshment?"

He put it that way because he wasn't sure what was in the amber liquid—it might be something more suited for male than for junior female consumption.

"You certainly may, Mr. Buchanan," said Nancy promptly. Her face seemed to light up when she smiled. The sun shone no more brightly than it had five minutes ago; the soft spring airs which wafted in from the garden through the open French doors were no more sweetly flower-scented than they had been. But for Franklin Buchanan nothing on that day would be quite the same again. Or on any day thereafter, as he dimly sensed while he hastened to do his lady's bidding. He wasn't exactly sure yet why he felt that way. But he did know he was glad he had worn his epaulet!

The *Hornet's* cruise in the West Indies was uneventful. Franklin Buchanan attained the permanent rank of lieutenant in January, 1825, and was detached from the *Hornet* in September of that year. Naturally he visited Annapolis to pay his respects to Senator and Mrs. Lloyd and their family—and Miss Nancy Lloyd, now well on the way to her eighteenth birthday and acquiring a retinue of young gentlemen who did not seem pleased by Nancy's unaffected delight at Franklin's arrival. It was a delight, he sensed, not wholeheartedly shared by her parents. Nobody said so in so many words, but Franklin came away with the feeling that a daughter of Senator Lloyd was hardly to be seriously addressed by a naval officer who had no resources but his pay. Franklin had never thought much about money. He knew that his mother had enough to live on comfortably, and that Grandfather McKean had not forgotten her in his will; but with the girls to think of, there was just enough. He heard some talk of an increase in the pay of the Navy, but there had been talk of that every year and nothing much seemed to happen.

Nothing much happened about Franklin's repeated requests for sea duty, either. The spring of 1826 dragged on,



with Franklin fretting and fuming. In May he saw an item in Niles' *Weekly Register* about the launching, at Beacham's shipyard in Baltimore, of a sixty-four-gun battleship "built for the South American market."

The astute Mr. Beacham wasn't building battleships on speculation, Franklin was sure. He must have had a customer for this one, all duly signed up, before her keel was laid. Maybe he might be looking for a captain who could deliver her to that customer in South America. Franklin sent off a letter of inquiry to shipbuilder Beacham and two more to well-fixed relatives in Baltimore who might say a word for him. Then he found he couldn't sit and wait patiently for an answer. He went to Baltimore himself, hurried from the stagecoach office to the shipyard and found Beacham on the deck of the new battleship watching her foremast being lowered into her by the giant timber crane which riggers called the "masting shears." It was a lucky meeting place. The shipbuilder began by saying that Franklin looked "almighty young" for the command he wanted, but Franklin displayed such thorough mastery of the details of a battleship's rigging and construction that within half an hour Beacham had concluded he couldn't do better.

"She's sold to the Emperor of Brazil," Beacham told Franklin, "and since he's at war with his neighbor in Buenos Aires, he's in a terrible hurry to have the ship delivered. Consequence is, His Majesty's paying a bonus for rushing things—in which you'll share. Can you get leave from the Navy?"

Franklin could and did, and went on Beacham's payroll at a rate roughly equivalent to the pay of a Navy commodore. He spent the next three months getting officers and crew together—no problem hiring good ones with extra pay for all hands—and overseeing the fitting out of the ship. She dropped down to Annapolis to take on her final sea stores—one last afternoon with Nancy—and Franklin was rolling down to Rio on the quarter-deck of his first command.

Rolling was the word for it, just at first.

Five days out from the Virginia capes, the wind suddenly rose from gale force to something very near a hurricane. Rousing from his cabin shortly after midnight, Franklin was glad he had spent some time and energy drilling his crew aloft.

"Get the tops'ls off her, Mr. Collins," he yelled through the howling storm. "Bend the storm stays'ls—that's all the canvas she'll carry in this weather."

The battleship dipped her blunt nose into a giant roller; the sea swept along her deck, flinging Franklin against the binnacle. As he recovered his balance he could see the dim forms of the topmen going up the main rigging; the masts swung through giant arcs against the black sky as the ship plunged and rolled.

They were good seamen. Franklin watched them anxiously; the man that goes overboard in this storm is a dead duck, his sailor's instinct warned him.

"I don't like the motion of the mainmast, Mr. Collins," Franklin called to his first officer. "Too much whip to it."

"New rigging, sir. Shrouds and stays are stretching," the mate bellowed back.

The men had to stay aloft till the topsails were furled; those sails had to be taken in if the ship was to ride out the storm safely. But every moment they spent on that gyrating mast was a moment lived with danger. This was a far worse storm than the one which had killed the *Java's* topmen, long ago. There was no dry-rot in these timbers, Franklin had seen to that himself, but even sound, well-seasoned oak might not stand up under the horrible beating of this wind and sea, with the loosening rigging failing to give proper support.

The fifty seamen on the main topsail yard, fighting to furl the stubborn, slatting canvas, heard a new voice cheering them on. "One hand for yourself and one for the ship, lads!" And here was their captain, working his way along the foot-

ropes with the rest of them, and giving short sharp orders at just the right moment.

If he couldn't spare them danger, he could share it. The fact of his presence there on that slanting, swaying yard conveyed that thought to every sailor mind, as Franklin had known it would. They got the topsail furled at last, and Franklin was the last man on deck. The ship rode easier now, relieved of the pressure of the fore and main topsails. The worst danger was over—and with morning a pale sun behind thinning clouds gave promise of a new and better day.

Cautiously Franklin made a little more sail, set men to work taking up the slack in the rigging. If that mainmast had gone over the side . . . But it hadn't, because Franklin had known how to get the last extra ounce of effort out of sailormen.

So, presently, came bright skies and smoother seas, and on Christmas morning, 1826, Franklin Buchanan sailed his ship into the beautiful harbor of Rio de Janeiro, amid the salutes of the Brazilian forts and men-of-war, and was rowed ashore to report himself to the Imperial Minister of Marine. The formalities of the transfer took some time to complete. It was early in February before Franklin was free to take his homeward passage in an American schooner—with a draft on a Baltimore bank in his pocket which represented a very sizable nest-egg for a young lieutenant not yet twenty-seven years old.

Shipbuilder Beacham was delighted to see him and to receive the heavily sealed packet which contained, besides a lot of official papers, the final installment of the money owed Beacham & Company by the Brazilian Emperor. His satisfaction took the form of a substantial extra bonus for Franklin, in recognition of a job well done. Franklin immediately dashed off a letter to the Secretary of the Navy, reporting his return to the United States and applying for sea duty, and hastened to Annapolis to see Nancy Lloyd.

She received him joyously and was much excited about

his stories of storms at sea and sunny Rio de Janeiro, but her father's attitude was one of cool reserve which squelched Franklin's high resolve to ask him for his daughter's hand that very afternoon. What was a \$2,500 bonus to a man of Senator Lloyd's wealth—or that of some other Maryland families whose sons were more than eager for Nancy's favor? Walking in the garden a little later, Nancy made it clear to Franklin where her favor was bestowed—it was the first time she'd ever let him kiss her. But, "we'll have to wait a little while longer till I can talk Father round" was the best encouragement she could offer for the future.

Two days later he arrived home to be happily greeted by his mother and sisters and to learn that his brother McKean had resigned his midshipman's warrant to accept appointment as a purser in the Navy.

"I'm glad to hear it," Franklin announced. "Mac will be much happier in a purser's billet than he'd ever be as a deck officer."

A few days later he himself was off to the West Indies to chase pirates again, as lieutenant in the sloop-of-war *Natchez*.

In June, 1829, he was ordered to the frigate *Constellation*, for another cruise to the Mediterranean. On his way from New York to Norfolk to join his new ship, Franklin had a day or two at home and another bitter-sweet afternoon in Annapolis. Nancy Lloyd was a young woman of firm convictions; she would not marry Franklin against her father's wishes, she would not marry anyone else against the wishes of her own heart.

The *Constellation*, a famous old frigate, was commanded by Captain A. S. Wadsworth, under whom Franklin had served in the training brig *Prometheus*. She wore the broad pennant of Commodore James Biddle, the same Philadelphia Biddle whom Franklin had yearned to make his first cruise with back in 1815, and who was now appointed to the command of the Mediterranean Squadron.

Franklin found his duties as third lieutenant of the flag-

ship exacting and on the whole not too interesting. He stood his watches, looked after the well-being of the junior officers and men of his division, and enjoyed once in a while a run on shore in one of the familiar ports of the Mediterranean. He did have two bits of luck on this cruise, though.

One came to him on a gray and stormy afternoon when a seaman, sent aloft with others to take in sail, lost his footing and went over the side.

"Man overboard!" shouted Lieutenant Paulding, who had the deck. "Away lifeboat!"

"Belay that, Mr. Paulding!" roared Captain Wadsworth. "No boat can live in that sea. I'll not order ten men to their deaths trying to save one."

The struggling sailor was fast being carried astern. Franklin, who was not on watch, couldn't bear the sight.

"May I ask for volunteers, sir?" he begged Wadsworth, and without waiting for an answer, he leaped into the quarter boat—hanging ready at the stern davits—and yelled: "Who'll try to save our shipmate, hearties?"

There was a rush of men aft as a dozen piled into the boat.

"Lower away!" Franklin ordered.

Down went the boat. The sea took her as the falls were freed. Franklin, standing upright in her stern, gripped the steering oar with both hands, shouting, "Give way together!" as the boat soared high on the crest of a mighty wave, down into the trough and up another slope of gray water. Five minutes—ten—Franklin and his boat's crew fought to keep their little craft afloat, to keep the great waves from rolling her over and over.

"There he is!" screamed the lookout in the bow. The boat swooped down into another wave-trough, the bowman knelt with outthrust boat hook. Somehow—Franklin was never afterward quite sure how it was done—they dragged the drowning sailor into the boat.

The frigate had come about and was tacking back to pick them up. It took nice seamanship for her watch officer and

for Franklin to get the boat alongside under her lee where the falls could be hooked on again to hoist it in. Franklin sprang over the rail to the deck amid the frantic cheers of the crew. First to greet him was Commodore Biddle.

"I never expected to see you again, Mr. Buchanan," he cried, pumping Franklin's hand.

From that moment on, Franklin had the unswerving regard of the gallant commodore, who held courage as being above all other virtues.

His other bit of luck on this Mediterranean cruise was his growing friendship with the *Constellation's* gifted chaplain, the Reverend E. C. Wines, whose interest in youngsters encouraged Franklin to put in some sort of order the ideas about the training of midshipmen which he had been nourishing for years. Chaplain Wines, who was charged with the scholastic instruction of the frigate's mids, soon became convinced that their schooling should be better organized. He had visited the Army's famous Military Academy at West Point, then under the command of the distinguished "father of the Military Academy," Colonel Sylvanus Thayer, and was full of praise for Thayer's system.

"There should," he said, "be such an institution for the Navy, which could take young men and fit them for a naval career by a four-year course of instruction under strict discipline."

"I heartily agree," Franklin answered. "When steam propulsion comes, officers will have to be engineers as well as seamen. They *must* have a sound education in mathematics and the natural sciences."

"Which cannot possibly be attained under present arrangements!" cried the chaplain. "It is simply impossible to carry on an orderly and systematic educational program with all the interruptions of sea duty. At West Point, every cadet must recite in every subject every day; marks are posted weekly, and at the end of each half year cadets deficient in *any* subject are discharged and sent home."

"An ideal system," agreed Franklin, "but a system we'll never have in the Navy as long as it's governed by splendid old gentlemen who will not understand that what was good enough for them is no longer good enough for the rising generation."

"Thayer had much the same kind of prejudice to face back in 1817 when he took charge of the Military Academy," said Wines. "He overcame it, I'm told, by sheer strength of character and iron determination. Maybe the Navy needs a Thayer."

He was looking keenly at Franklin in the yellow light of the wardroom lamps. Franklin shook his head. "You've told me that the Military Academy was an existing institution in 1817," he pointed out. "What Thayer had to do was to reform something that had already been created by Congress. In the Navy, we haven't made such a beginning yet. What's needed is a president or perhaps a secretary who sees and understands the need and can carry weight enough to get the proper legislation passed. And how can that be, when immediately the thing's proposed the old shellbacks will set up a clamor that'll convince most congressmen they'll be wasting the country's money?"

But Wines was right just the same, Franklin was sure. He began making notes about how a naval academy should be organized and regulated, which were to be very helpful to him at a later date.

The more he worked out his thoughts on paper, the more convinced he became that the key problem was continuity—four successive years of instruction, training and discipline, starting at a fairly early age, eliminating dull wits and misfits along the way and coming out at the end with a graduating class composed of young men who had proven both that they really desired and really deserved to become officers in the Navy. Chaplain Wines helped him with suggestions and friendly criticism, and Commodore Biddle—to whom Wines mentioned what Franklin was doing—surprised Franklin by

asking him to dinner, questioning him closely and critically about his ideas regarding a naval school, and then slamming fist on table with the pronouncement:

"You're steering the right course, Mr. Buchanan! Keep at it, and when we're home again I'll see what I can do to pass the word."

Home again to Norfolk came the *Constellation* in mid-November, 1831, too late for Franklin to celebrate his thirty-first birthday with his family, but in plenty of time to get to Philadelphia for the Christmas holidays. On the way—by bay steamer to Baltimore, canal boat over to the Delaware River and river steamer to Philadelphia—a group of discharged seamen from the *Constellation* decided to take out on Franklin their resentment of Captain Wadsworth's stern and rigid discipline, which Franklin had faithfully carried out as a matter of course. They had provided themselves with plenty of whisky, and by the time they were aboard the canalboat several of them were drunk. So loud were their threats against Buchanan, and so freely did they display their long sheath knives, that the civilian passengers were much alarmed.

"Give us Buchanan so's we can cut his black heart out, or we'll throw you into the canal," one sailor yelled at the canalboat's captain, who started to wade into the gang with a boat hook. Franklin pushed past him and stood facing the angry sailors.

"Here I am," he said. "I know you men—all of you—and you know me. Let's see who'll be the first to come forward to cut my heart out."

He stood there, hands in the pockets of his overcoat, waiting. He hoped they would think he had a pistol in each hand; unfortunately his pistols were below in his kitbag.

For a long minute he faced them; not a man moved to accept his offer.

"Very well then," barked Franklin. "Put those knives away if you're not going to use them."



One after another, the bright blades disappeared into their sheaths.

"Get up into the bows and stay there," Franklin ordered, "and don't let me hear of you disturbing these ladies and gentlemen any further."

With which Franklin deliberately turned his back on the would-be mutineers and walked calmly aft.

The captain stared at him, awestricken. "That took real guts, mister," he pronounced.

"Not so much," said Franklin quietly. "There were three or four men there who had been in my division and knew I'd always dealt with them fairly."

For all his calm manner, though, the incident troubled Franklin. He had prided himself on being a firm disciplinarian, but he had come to believe that discipline was mostly a matter of character and needn't depend on punishment—especially the use of the cat-o'-nine-tails—nearly as much as Captain Wadsworth thought necessary. Of the caning of midshipmen, another habit of Wadsworth's, he entirely disapproved. Yet these were the usages of the Navy. So keeping proper discipline in a school packed with youngsters, or in the school ship which must be a part of such an establishment, might prove a more complicated problem than he had quite realized.

This fact was brought home to Franklin even more strongly in his next ship, the battleship *Delaware*, in which he returned to the Mediterranean as first lieutenant. *Delaware* was commanded by Captain Henry E. Ballard, who prided himself on running a "smart ship"—a reputation produced by the constant application of the "cat" to seamen's backs for the smallest irregularity, and of canes and rope's ends to midshipmen's posteriors whenever they didn't jump to carry out orders as quickly as the nearest senior thought they should. As first lieutenant, Franklin was duty bound to carry out this regime, with which he was thoroughly disgusted by the time the cruise was over.

"We'll never begin rebuilding the Navy along modern, forward-looking lines as long as this sort of thing goes on," Franklin told himself. "We need a new deal, both in discipline and in the education of a new, up-to-date lot of young officers."

Something should be done. Something must be done. But the years were passing and nothing was being done. Voices were heard in protest—among them, that of Matthew Calbraith Perry, now a commander and a vigorous advocate of steam and therefore of scientific education for naval officers. The dead hand of the past in the persons of the "old shell-backs" stifled the protests.

When Franklin went ashore at the Brooklyn Navy Yard in December, 1834, at the end of the last cruise he was ever to make in the waters of the blue Mediterranean, he was almost ready to give up hope on two counts: a change for the better in the Navy, and a change for the better in his prospects of finding happiness with Nancy Lloyd.

But the winds of change were stirring.

Two letters were waiting for him when he reached Philadelphia. One was months old, from Nancy, telling of her father's sudden death at the age of fifty-six. The last sentence made Franklin's heart jump, especially the underlining. "*Mother and I* both hope you can come to see us soon." The other letter, only a week old, was from his brother, Purser McKean Buchanan, and datelined at the Navy Department in Washington, where McKean was settling his accounts for his last cruise: "All the talk here, you'll be glad to know, is that sentiment in Congress now favors passage of the Navy pay bill. President Jackson's quarrel with France has made the western congressmen aware at long last that we have a Navy—and might need it in a hurry. It's a safe bet that your lieutenant's pay will soon be \$1,200 yearly on waiting orders and \$1,500 at sea."

Franklin answered Nancy's letter before leaving New York; then he hastened home to Philadelphia to talk things over

with his mother and found that Nancy had written to her, too, asking anxiously when Franklin could be expected back.

"Fifteen hundred a year isn't much to a Lloyd of Maryland," Franklin said. "But I've been saving my pay and building up on that South American nest egg I started with—I'll have close to seven thousand dollars when I deposit my pay voucher for this last cruise with the Philadelphia Savings Fund Society. Mother, do you think I could—"

"I certainly do think," his mother said decidedly, as Franklin paused in some embarrassment, "that you'd better hurry to Annapolis as fast as you can get there, or your Nancy—if I haven't forgotten how to read between the lines of a girl's letter—is going to be cruelly disappointed."

As usual, Franklin's wise and loving mother turned out to be right. Franklin Buchanan and Nancy (Anne Catherine) Lloyd were married on February 19, 1835, in the very same lovely Annapolis drawing room where he had first met her eleven years earlier. His mother stood proudly beside Nancy's mother as the minister read the beautiful words of the Episcopalian marriage service. Eleven years—a long time, but his Nancy had waited. Now all the years ahead were theirs, together. Humbly, as he knelt for the minister's blessing, Franklin gave thanks for this great happiness that was his.

And for once even the Navy Department proved kindly and considerate. After the wedding trip, Franklin was appointed to the command of the receiving ship at the Baltimore naval station, which entitled him to "command pay" and also to various allowances not available to officers at sea. This prosperity enabled him to buy a small but handsome brick house on Scott Street in Annapolis. That would be home now, the home to which he would hasten when he returned from a sea voyage; for he went to sea again in 1839 for a cruise in the Pacific in the famous old frigate *Constitution*.

But before that something else happened: a school for

midshipmen was opened at the Naval Asylum (originally a home for pensioned seamen) in Philadelphia, and Franklin had an opportunity to visit it and leave some of his notes on the subject of naval education with Commodore Biddle, who was to be in charge. This school offered little more than a temporary course of instruction to prepare midshipmen for their examinations for lieutenant. Still, it was a beginning.

"You've done a thoughtful piece of work here, Buchanan," the commodore said, leafing through Franklin's notes. "Of course you're way ahead of your time—we won't have anything like your four-year continuous course for a while yet, though I agree with you it's the right way to do the job. Steam's coming, and the steam Navy's going to need more sciences than just navigation. Calbraith Perry's up in New York building a steamer right now. She'll be fit only for harbor service, but she's a beginning. We'll have seagoing steam fighting ships before you know it."

The commodore was a prophet. The year that Franklin sailed for his cruise in the Pacific (the only time he was ever to be shipmates with his brother McKean) Congress appropriated funds for two side-wheel steam frigates, *Missouri* and *Mississippi*—the Navy's first ocean-going steam warships.

The winds of change were blowing harder.

## 6 The Naval Academy Is Born

FRANKLIN'S CRUISE IN THE PACIFIC WAS A SHORT ONE. FOR the first time in his life, he had begun to feel physically not quite up to the full performance of his duty. He couldn't understand what was wrong with him, for he took pride in keeping himself in top condition. But now he was troubled by colds and aches, he grew short of temper and worried over every detail that went wrong.

Wise brother McKean guessed the truth. "What's different about you, Frank," he said, "is that you're a father now and you're fretting to get back to your family."

McKean was right. During those four happy years in Annapolis, Franklin had become the father of three little girls—Sallie Lloyd, named for Nancy's mother, Letitia McKean, named for Franklin's mother, and Alice. They had wound their baby fingers around his heart and he would never be quite the same again. The day would come when he could go to sea and do his duty without allowing the thought of his dear ones to come between him and what had to be done, but fatherhood was a little too new for him to take this first separation in stride.

So he accepted McKean's advice and asked Commodore Claxton to let him return to the States at the first opportunity on the grounds of ill-health. He arrived in New York in

June, 1840, obtained three months' leave and hurried home, to be rapturously greeted by Nancy and the little ones.

"I hadn't dared hope to see you for another year, Franklin," Nancy told him. "Are you going to be home with us all for a while?"

"Just as long a while as I can manage," Franklin assured her, as he bounced little Alice in his arms, while Sallie and Letitia clung to his legs and clamored to be picked up too.

Nancy grinned at him. "Which means," she remarked, "until you can't stand not being at sea any longer."

"I can stand that for quite a spell, my dear," said Franklin firmly.

All through the rest of the year Nancy kept watching for the first signs of restlessness, the signs she had learned to recognize. They didn't appear. In September, there was an uproarious celebration of Franklin's fortieth birthday, with quite a few of his Navy friends in and out of the house all afternoon and evening: not a word did she hear from Franklin about wanting to be off again. Christmas passed, and the early months of 1841; still Franklin seemed content at home. But with the spring he did grow restless. It was time for him to be earning sea pay and doing the work he had been born to do, he told Nancy. She made no demur when he applied to the Secretary of the Navy for sea duty. He was informed that his request would be "duly considered."

"I'm the forgotten man of the Navy," he grumbled. Yet his foot was now on the very threshold of fame, had he but known it. The great accomplishments of his life lay immediately before him.

Up in New York, Captain Matthew Calbraith Perry—beginning to be known as the "father of the steam navy"—was thinking of Franklin Buchanan as one of the chosen spirits who should have a forward part in the great change from sail to steam; and in Philadelphia, stout Commodore Biddle was laboring to improve his school for midshipmen and finding a lot of sense in Buchanan's notes on the subject.

Two of his assistants, Commander William McKean and a young professor of mathematics named William Chauvenet, were enthusiastic about these Buchanan suggestions, though their opportunities for putting them into practice were sadly limited.

Thus the stars in their courses were now shaping the Buchanan future. These twin ideas—that we needed a steam navy and that a steam navy needed educated officers—were coming together.

Franklin began to receive letters from Perry and Will McKean which hinted at the coming changes and that they might affect Franklin's own future; so he managed to stay content during the summer. On September 8, 1841, just nine days before his forty-first birthday, he received his commission as a commander in the Navy, thus acquiring the right to wear two gold epaulets, one on each shoulder, and a very welcome rise in pay. On September 27, ten days after his birthday, his beloved Nancy gave birth to twin daughters, who were named Nannie and Ellen. Now there were five small mouths to feed, five small sweethearts to cherish, but he could not bear the thought of leaving just yet. He did not pursue his request for sea duty.

In April, out of a clear spring sky, came orders—the orders he would have wished for above all others. He was to report aboard the brand-new steam frigate *Mississippi* as her executive officer.

The *Mississippi*, like all steam warships of that day and for twenty years to come, was a wooden ship with both sail power and steam power. She could spread 19,000 square feet of sails on her three masts, and she had two huge paddle wheels driven by her steam engine. Under steam alone she could make a speed of seven knots. The towering funnel that rose between her fore and main masts was, to Franklin, the symbol of the new steam navy that must come into being if America was to hold her own on the seas. To many an old-time officer, it was a filthy abomination that meant

the end of snow-white decks and clouds of snow-white canvas, the debasement of the glorious traditions of the sea, the transformation of sailormen into grubby mechanics. Franklin, welcoming Chief Engineer John Faron into the ward-room mess of the *Mississippi*, went out of his way to make the newcomer at home; not all engineers were so lucky in the early days of steam. There were captains who couldn't bring themselves to accept the idea that engineers were entitled to be treated as officers.

But the day that Franklin stood on the bridge of the *Mississippi* and gave the unaccustomed order, "Slow ahead"—that day, that moment he knew that his vision was truth. Deep in the bowels of the ship, a bell clanged. The engine wheezed, the paddles began to churn. The great frigate, without a scrap of sail set, moved away from the wharf at the Washington Navy Yard, out into the Potomac, answering her helm perfectly. By Franklin's side, the *Mississippi's* skipper, Captain Salter, asked the question which had never bothered the Navy's captains before, but which would be uppermost in their minds from now on: "Do we have enough coal to take her to New York, Commander Buchanan?"

Franklin grinned at him, happy as a schoolboy playing hookey. "No, sir. We'll have to use sail for the most part. But we'll find out how the engine behaves in a seaway—we've plenty of coal for a thorough trial."

All that summer Captain Salter and Franklin Buchanan operated the *Mississippi* up and down the Atlantic coast, learning how best to coordinate sail power and steam power and writing sheaves of reports and recommendations. In the fall she was laid up at Boston for extensive alterations to meet these suggestions. Franklin wasn't disappointed that everything wasn't perfection. A concept so new to the Navy as a steam-propelled frigate was bound to need a lot of complex adjustments which could only be worked out by trial and error. Captain Matthew Calbraith Perry, just back from Europe where he took a long hard look at the new steam



warships of the British and French navies, thought it a miracle that *Mississippi* and her sister ship *Missouri* had turned out as well as they had so far.

For Franklin one of the chief delights of these trial-trip days had been his long talks with an eager young man who had reported aboard for temporary duty when the frigate first touched at New York.

"My name is Chauvenet, sir, William Chauvenet," he told Franklin, lifting his hat respectfully. "I hold an appointment as Professor of Mathematics at the Naval Asylum School in Philadelphia. Commodore Biddle has been kind enough to give me this letter to present to you, sir."

Franklin liked the newcomer's looks. He was dark-haired, with a thin, intense face and brown eyes that glowed with energy. Biddle's letter commended him to Franklin as one of his most gifted assistants.

"Glad to have you aboard, Professor," Franklin said heartily.

"Thank you, sir," answered Chauvenet. "Could I please have a look around the ship first of all?"

"Of course. Come right along."

Chauvenet asked questions incessantly—questions which soon made clear to Franklin that the young professor had never before been aboard a steam warship or any other naval vessel, yet questions which were at times singularly penetrating.

That evening after the servants had cleared away the dinner dishes, Franklin found Chauvenet in the wardroom deep in talk with Chief Engineer Faron.

"I'm wondering," he was saying as Franklin joined them, "whether in future it's going to be necessary for a steam warship to have two sets of officers—one to handle the ship and one to handle the machinery. Wouldn't it be more efficient to educate young officers to do both jobs?"

"They're entirely separate professions," Faron rumbled.

"I don't quite see why their application to naval purposes

need remain so," Chauvenet persisted. "Navigation and mechanics are separate sciences, but they have a common foundation in mathematics. Couldn't a bright lad learn something of both in say four years of hard study and practical work?" He glanced hopefully at Franklin.

"Rather a revolutionary notion, isn't it?" Franklin suggested, smiling.

"I suppose so, sir," said Chauvenet. "But today when you were explaining the sails and rigging of this ship, it occurred to me that after all a sailing vessel is just a machine—an extremely complicated machine for harnessing and using the power of the wind to propel her hull through the water. The training of a young officer in seamanship is essentially based on his gaining a detailed understanding of this wind-power machine so that he can use it efficiently under conditions of wind and sea of almost infinite variety. You told me, sir, that three to five years of intensive application are required before a reasonably bright midshipman can safely be entrusted with full charge of a watch at sea, even under supervision. Would it be more difficult to give him a detailed understanding of steam machinery than of this wind-power machinery? The former's hardly more complicated; less so if anything."

"You argue forcibly, Professor," Franklin admitted. "I like the way your mind works."

On the whole Franklin was happy about his first cruise in a steam warship. He was happy, too, when he was immediately ordered to the command of the sloop-of-war *Vincennes* for a pirate-chasing cruise in the West Indies. It meant going back to sail, but it was his first command assignment in the Navy and one which was given him over the heads of fifty of his seniors, which also meant that Commander Franklin Buchanan was highly thought of by the "powers that be."

This cruise added one more item to the Buchanan legend

of heroism. A local pilot ran the *Vincennes* aground on a sandbar off the south shore of Cuba, where she stuck hard and fast amidships. After she had pounded on the bar for several hours, despite all efforts to free her, Franklin realized she could not take much more punishment. A heavy squall was rising, blacking out the northern sky. The ship was afloat forward, and Franklin resolved on the desperate expedient of making all sail in the hope that the squall would tear her free from the bar by main force. He set topsails and courses, sent all hands forward on the bowsprit and jib boom to tip her forward as much as possible.

The squall struck, the ship shuddered, her masts bent under the sudden terrible pressure of the blast—then off she slid into deep water while the crew roared acclaim of their captain. If she had stuck fast for another sixty seconds, in all likelihood she would have been dismasted, a doomed and helpless wreck. Yet in the end she was doomed anyway if she stayed where she was. Franklin had simply had the steel nerve to take the best chance that offered, even though it meant instant destruction if it failed.

After further service in the Caribbean and the Gulf of Mexico, the *Vincennes* returned to the United States in August, 1844. Once again Franklin Buchanan hurried home to Maryland, but this time not to the brick house on Scott Street in Annapolis. He went instead to a lovely estate on the Miles River, on the famous Eastern Shore of Chesapeake Bay near the town of Easton, Maryland. This stately home, known as "The Rest," had been acquired by Nancy Buchanan under the terms of her father's will, which established a trust fund to provide suitable homes for his daughters if and when they married and acquired growing families of children. The Buchanan brood had outgrown the town house in Annapolis. They needed more room, more sunlight and fresh air, and "The Rest" was the answer.

And now the stars in their courses were moving into new

configurations. In November, 1844, James K. Polk of Tennessee was elected President of the United States, and he chose as his Secretary of the Navy the distinguished scholar, educator and historian, George Bancroft of Massachusetts. This was a fateful choice—for the Navy, for the nation and, incidentally, for Franklin Buchanan. When the Cabinet post was offered to him, Bancroft delayed acceptance until he had made careful inquiry into the state and needs of the Navy. He became convinced of the need for a naval academy, and his historical labors—the first two volumes of his massive history of the United States had already been published at that time—had shown him the difficulties in the way of gaining political support for any such novel venture. It seems probable that he spoke frankly with the President-elect on this subject. At all events, he took office as Secretary of the Navy with the resolve fully formed that his first task should be to get a real naval academy under way.

During that winter while these great political changes were taking place and many Americans were beginning to believe that war was very near, the mind and heart of Franklin Buchanan were weighed down with grief. For on February 9, 1845, his mother breathed her last.

He forced himself to think of other things—there was still work to be done. And a very important part of that work, as far as the Navy was concerned, was coming now to Franklin Buchanan. His first hint of what was in store for him came by way of another letter from Will McKean, who was still helping Commodore Biddle at the Naval Asylum school.

"The new Secretary, Mr. Bancroft, has been here," Will wrote, "and has asked a thousand questions about everything. He took away your notes with him. From what he said to me and to Professor Chauvenet, I do believe he intends to try to start a real naval school for midshipmen, such as you and I have so often talked about. When he left here he was going on to New York to see Captain Calbraith Perry, who

will surely encourage him in that object. The examining board for midshipmen meets here in June; Captain Perry is among the members. I'll be looking forward to hearing what he thinks of Secretary Bancroft and his ideas."

This was sometime in April, 1845, when Bancroft had been in office only a little more than a month. Franklin was still "waiting orders." He had applied for command of the *Mississippi*, which was completing her alterations at Boston. Nothing came of this except a note from his friend Commander Du Pont, then temporarily on duty in the Department, hinting that it might be well for Franklin to "remain available" for the time being, since "changes were in prospect for which you might turn out to be the indispensable instrument." Frank Du Pont was a levelheaded fellow with many friends in high places. Anyway, it was spring on the eastern shore of Maryland, a season when it is easy to find excuses for staying there a little longer. Franklin waited.

Secretary Bancroft, meanwhile, was doing some very astute planning. He saw that he would imperil his hopes for a naval academy by going to Congress and asking for an appropriation: other secretaries had done that and had gone out of office while Congress still debated the pros and cons.

Wise Secretary Bancroft decided to keep clear of congressional rocks and shoals by the simple process of starting his school without benefit of Congress. That meant without any extra money, however. Bancroft made a careful study of the available naval appropriations and discovered that the pay of the professors and teachers then serving in the Navy was all lumped under the general head of "instruction." There was nothing in the law that prevented the Secretary from using any of this sum (some \$28,000 annually) for any purpose he desired, so long as he could reasonably call it "instruction." Since Bancroft had already determined that only about half a dozen of the professors had any real teaching qualities, he saw that he could get rid of the others, assemble

the few good ones at a given place and require all instruction of midshipmen to take place there, using the balance of the money to maintain the establishment. But where?

The location would have to be on land already owned by the government, with sufficient buildings to take care of quarters for officers and midshipmen, schoolrooms, a mess hall and other necessities. Bancroft's \$28,000 might allow for some minor repairs, but not for new construction. Also the site must, the Secretary felt, be at a seaport, where a practice ship might be berthed and where the midshipmen would be in the physical presence of the sea—the element on which they were to serve. A harbor fort would be suitable; there were several which were not manned. The Secretary obtained particulars of these forts. Of them all, old Fort Severn at Annapolis, Maryland, seemed the most attractive. Its buildings were adequate and in good repair, it had a battery of guns with which the midshipmen could practice, and it fronted directly on Annapolis Harbor and the wide estuary of the Severn River.

But Bancroft was too wise to come right out himself and propose that the new academy should be located at Fort Severn or indeed that there should be an academy at all. Instead, he took advantage of the assembly at the Philadelphia Naval Asylum of five senior captains for the examination of midshipmen for promotion—taking care that Captain Perry should be one, and Captain Mayo, who lived in Annapolis and thought it the center of the world, another. He directed these gentlemen to act as a special board, in addition to their examiners' duties, to determine where—IF there should be a naval academy—it should be located. This immediately focused the argument not on *whether* there should be an academy, but *where* it should be. Fort Severn won out, due to Mayo's persistence and the fact that no two of the others agreed on an alternate site. Bancroft promptly applied to the new Secretary of War, William L. Marcy, to transfer Fort Severn to the Navy, which Marcy promptly agreed to.

The astute Secretary had thus, by deft maneuvering and by never saying too much too soon, produced several interesting results: He was able to say that the location of a naval academy at Fort Severn, Annapolis, Maryland, had been approved by a board of senior officers who commanded the fullest respect of the naval service. He had a satisfactory site for the academy, and he had money enough with which to operate it.

What was now necessary was that the academy, in its first year or so, should show such promising results as to gain respect and acceptance from the Navy, and yet stay within limits that could continue to be financed by available funds until it had so thoroughly proven itself that Congress could be asked for a little extra help. Obviously, a great deal would depend on the character, tact and ability of the officer who was selected as its first superintendent.

Of course, all Annapolis had been buzzing with excitement ever since it became known, in late June, that the board at Philadelphia had recommended Fort Severn to be the location of a naval academy. Franklin Buchanan, naturally, had heard from friends in Annapolis and Washington about what was going on, but his first official indication that he might play a personal part in the project was his receipt of an order appointing him, with Commanders William W. McKean and Samuel F. Du Pont, members of a board to re-examine the whole project, to give an unbiased second opinion as to the suitability of Fort Severn as the site, and to recommend individuals to be appointed to the staff. The main purpose of appointing this new board was to gain the support of the younger and more progressive officers of the Navy, of whom the membership of the board was as fully representative as the board of examiners had been of the older element.

The board met in the little building on Sixteenth Street in Washington which then housed the Navy Department, and was fully briefed by the Secretary in person as to his

hopes and ideas for the academy. The members then proceeded to Annapolis and made a thorough inspection of Fort Severn. They were unanimous in approving the site, and in recommending, for the original staff of the academy, three officers then on duty at the Naval Asylum school—Lieutenant James H. Ward, Professor Chauvenet, and Professor Henry H. Lockwood, a graduate of the Military Academy.

Franklin's natural tendency to excitement kept bubbling over during these discussions. Here was the ideal he had dreamed of actually coming to pass after all these years. His cousin Will joshed him affectionately about his eagerness.

"Steady as you go, old man. We're getting somewhere at last."

Du Pont, now a magnificent figure of a man, well over six feet tall, with a commanding presence and beginning to develop what were to become the most imposing set of whiskers in the Navy, laughed genially.

"It runs in my mind, friend Franklin," he remarked, "that you'd rather have the command of this academy than be made an admiral. For my part I'd rather have command of the *Congress* in the Pacific Squadron, for which I've applied. There's going to be a war with Mexico in the next year or so, mark my words, and it's likely to start over California."

"I'd hate to have to choose between war service and having charge of our new school," Franklin admitted.

That night, alone in his room in the Maryland Hotel, he simply couldn't restrain himself from sitting down with pen and paper and starting to outline a set of regulations for the academy-to-be.

Far into the night he kept at it—idea after idea flowed from his busy pen. "Strict obedience and subordination are required of all midshipmen. Professors will keep records of all recitations and report weekly to the Superintendent the progress and relative merit of students. No intoxicating or spirituous liquors shall be brought within the limits of the school by any midshipman. No midshipman may go beyond



the limits of the Institution without permission from the Superintendent, or the officer in charge during his absence. . . .”

Finally, when it was very late, he laid aside his pen.

Why was he working so hard at a task he might never be called upon to perform? He had no answer to that question, but there was a little flutter of the day's excitement still in his heart.

Next morning, the officers of the board returned to Washington and presented their report to Secretary Bancroft. Shortly thereafter, Franklin received notice to call at the Secretary's office on the morning of August 7, 1845.

The gray-bearded Secretary rose to receive him. “Commander Buchanan,” he said, “it is my desire to appoint you Superintendent of the Naval School at Annapolis. I sincerely hope you will find it possible to accept this heavy responsibility.”

“I could ask nothing better, Mr. Secretary,” said Franklin, from the depths of a full heart.

“I am very happy to hear you say so,” the Secretary beamed, “though your previous warm interest in the subject had inclined me to the belief that you might accept. I have therefore already addressed to you this letter of guidance”—he picked up from his desk several sheets of paper covered with the round flowing handwriting beloved of government clerks—“which may be of use to you in preparing a plan of organization and a set of rules and regulations for the new institution. I'd be glad if you'd set about those tasks with as little delay as possible. If I may suggest, it might be well for you to take this letter to your home, read and reflect upon it, and then set your ideas down on paper in full leisure and free of the interruptions which would be inevitable if you tried to work here in this building. Perhaps you'd be good enough to report to me here in say two weeks' time?”

So it was at home on the broad veranda of The Rest, with

Nancy sitting beside him on the cushioned seat, that Franklin worked out his plans and proposals, guided by the ideas set forth in Secretary Bancroft's letter—which in later days came to be called "the charter of the Naval Academy."

"Only a very great man indeed could have written such a letter, Franklin," Nancy said when she had read it through. "I like this thought especially: 'the officers of the American Navy, if they gain but opportunity for scientific instruction, may make themselves as distinguished for culture as they have been for gallant conduct.'"

"Yes, I liked that too," Franklin agreed, suppressing a grin. The thought was his own, taken—like a number of other ideas incorporated in the letter—from his own notes which the Secretary had borrowed from Commodore Biddle. "He means that about scientific instruction, too—mathematics, nautical astronomy, gunnery, the use of steam—"

"Yes," interrupted Nancy eagerly. "And see here where he calls for the study of Spanish or French, international law and the theory of morals—a really broadening education for the young men. Instead of letting them stay idle at home between cruises, they'll be kept busy improving themselves under proper discipline—not less strict, the Secretary says, than at civilian universities."

"It'll be a lot stricter than some civilian universities I know," Franklin promised her, "as long as I have anything to say about it. You'll notice the Secretary promises that no midshipman will be recommended for promotion who doesn't toe the mark, both in conduct and in his studies. But the civilian colleges and West Point, too, have one big advantage—they can keep their students for a continuous term. That won't be possible at the Naval School. The Secretary understands—see here, where he says the law doesn't yet provide for a preliminary school for naval officers such as West Point is for Army officers. Our students will already be serving as midshipmen, they can be called from their

studies and sent to sea anytime. Others will be sent to the school on their return from sea 'at whatever season of the year.' He's so right, it will be 'difficult to arrange a system of studies' to meet these conditions."

"Secretary Bancroft seems to have full confidence that you can succeed in doing just that, Franklin," said Nancy proudly. "And so do I. But, Franklin, you haven't said a word yet about where we're going to live. We still have the Annapolis house, of course, but it's really too small for the children."

"There's the commanding officer's house at Fort Severn, right in the middle of the grounds of the Naval School," Franklin told her. "It's a fine old colonial place, three stories and very handsome lawns and trees. If you like it, my dear, I think we'll all be comfortable there."

Nancy jumped up and did a little spin across the porch, her skirts whirling around her slender form. Then she ran to Franklin and kissed him.

"I'm so glad!" she cried. "I was afraid it would be a case of you working all week at Annapolis and coming home for Sundays, with duty keeping you even from that half the time. Now we'll all be together. Sallie and Letitia can go to school in town, and Alice can start next year. And we can come here for summer vacations—I suppose there'll be some sort of summer vacation?"

"I hope so, Nancy. But this is a brand-new project—we'll just have to wait and see how it works out."

Afterward, when Nancy had gone to tell the children the news, Franklin Buchanan sat in the sunshine, rereading one sentence in the last paragraph of Secretary Bancroft's letter.

"To yourself, to whose diligence and care the organization of the school is entrusted, will belong, in a good degree, the responsibility of a wise arrangement."

His dream had come true. But to have a dream was one thing; to have the responsibility for translating it into reality was quite another. The Naval Academy had been born.

Whether or not the infant grew up to be a sturdy and promising youth would indeed depend "in a good degree" on the qualities of mind and heart of Commander Franklin Buchanan.

## “The Duty of Receiving Instruction”

“HATS OFF!” BARKED LIEUTENANT WARD.

Fifty-six hands swept fifty-six blue caps from fifty-six heads. Fifty-six more or less youthful faces, some bearing a sturdy growth of whiskers, lifted toward the platform at the end of the room where the erect figure of Commander Buchanan stood beside the executive officer.

Chaplain Jones, who would double as instructor of English, began his invocation, asking the Lord's blessing on this school and those who came to it seeking knowledge.

Franklin Buchanan, now seeing all of his new charges together for the first time, hoped the good Lord would spare a little of that blessing—not to say help—for the new superintendent. He was going to need both. “What we have on our hands here,” he had said to Ward that very October morning, “can only be described as an unholy mess.” Now he had to straighten out that mess and make sense of it, just as he would do with the broken masts and spars of a frigate dismasted in a storm.

During the past month Franklin Buchanan had been working at Fort Severn day and night, trying to make a beginning at doing exactly that. Ward had been a tower of strength;

he had just the right combination of firmness and instinctive understanding of youngsters to make an ideal executive officer. But the final responsibility—and the decision in a thousand matters of tangled detail—belonged to the superintendent.

His clear blue eyes ranged over the faces before him. In the front rows were thirty-six midshipmen appointed in 1840; having completed the five years' service required to be examined for promotion, they were at the school solely for the purpose of cramming for their exams. They had been at sea for the greater part of the past five years in the Mediterranean, the Pacific, the South Atlantic, the West Indies. They had chased pirates, led the way aloft to reef topsails in a full gale, visited strange ports, caroused, fought duels and held themselves to be full-grown men. Their ages varied from eighteen to twenty-seven, so their opinion of themselves had some justification. There was a purposeful air about them for the most part. They were here for just one object, which, if successfully attained, would take them back to sea as passed midshipmen in a few months.

Behind them, thirteen midshipmen of the 1841 date were restive and sullen. They averaged but little younger than the 1840 group, and had been at sea for the better part of four years. But for them the examination for promotion was a year away; they were here because of Secretary Bancroft's new policy which required midshipmen on "waiting orders" to spend their shore time at Annapolis under instruction rather than idling at home. They considered themselves the victims of a cruel fate and bemoaned their lost leisure.

Finally, in the back row, were seven youngsters thirteen to sixteen years old: these were "acting midshipmen," recently appointed, and, in the words of Lieutenant Ward, "as innocent of any naval experience as so many newborn puppies."

The superintendent already understood the very wide variations among these young gentlemen as to scholastic at-

tainments. The diligent members of his newly appointed Academic Board—Lieutenant Ward, Professors Chauvenet, Lockwood and Girault, and Chaplain Jones—had made a hasty but on the whole thorough inquiry into each individual case.

Franklin's job—his big job—was to devise a course of instruction which would make the best use of the school's facilities to fit the circumstances of the young men before him, however short the stay of some of them might be, and which would also enable him to have classes into which other midshipmen arriving from sea at irregular times could be fitted according to their respective—and unforeseeable—educational needs. This was the "unholy mess" which bothered him.

Chaplain Jones was just finishing his invocation.

Franklin took a step forward. "Gentlemen!" he began, speaking sharply and clearly as was his custom on such occasions. "I am Commander Buchanan, superintendent of this Naval School." Briefly he described the purpose of the school and the authority by which it had been established.

"You will," he told the midshipmen, "be divided for purposes of instruction into two classes, the senior class to include all of the 1840 date, the junior class to include the newly appointed acting midshipmen, while the gentlemen of the 1841 date will be divided between these classes in accordance with their respective educational attainments or shortcomings.

"While at this school, you will be treated as gentlemen and be expected to conduct yourselves as such. From all of you it is further expected that you will improve every leisure moment in the acquirement of a knowledge of your profession, and you will remember that a good moral character is essential to any who aspire to a commission in the Navy. By carefully avoiding the first step toward intemperance, shunning the society of the dissolute and idle, and by cherishing the wish to deserve and the hope of receiving the approba-

tion of your country, you can alone render yourself able to occupy the high standing in the Navy to which many of you are destined.

"You will constantly bear in mind that the duty of receiving instruction is to be fulfilled with the same scrupulous care and diligence as any other duty of the naval service.

"By authority of the Secretary of the Navy, I now declare the Naval School at Annapolis, Maryland, to be formally opened this tenth day of October, 1845. The executive officer will read to you the rules and regulations for the internal government of the school, to which your strict obedience at all times will be required."

That afternoon there were no classes, in order to give the midshipmen a chance to settle themselves in their new quarters. Franklin, making a quick inspection with Ward, was far from satisfied.

The site of Fort Severn itself was decidedly attractive to a sailor's eye. The grounds, roughly rectangular in shape, were bounded on the south and west by a stone wall some eight feet high; on the north was Annapolis Harbor, and on the east the broad flood of the Severn River, both busy with shipping, sailboats and barges. It would be easy enough to have a wharf where a practice ship could be berthed, provided one ever became available. Also there was plenty of room for more buildings, provided money for new construction also became available. Meanwhile, he must make do with what he had.

His natural idea of providing quarters for midshipmen was to put them all together, as they were aboard ship. Thus the seniors could exercise some control and there could be a semblance at least of discipline. But at Fort Severn there was no way to keep the midshipmen under a single roof. The officers' quarters of the former Army post had been allotted—the commanding officer's house, a fine old mansion that far antedated the fort itself, went to Franklin and his family; a row of four connected houses nearby went to Ward and



the three professors, while the quartermaster's office was hastily done over as a home for Chaplain Jones. The only other good-sized building was the barracks, which had to be used to provide a mess hall and kitchen on its first floor and two large classrooms on the second. For the midshipmen there remained five smaller structures, most of them in poor repair, scattered far and wide over the nine acres of the school's grounds.

All of these became famous under the nicknames which their occupants gave them, and are an enduring part of the lore of the Naval Academy to this day. That October afternoon in 1845 they were alive with busy midshipmen, making themselves as comfortable as possible as long experience had taught most of them to do.

"I've marked the capacity of each set of quarters on the door, and pretty much left it to the older men to distribute themselves as they saw fit," Ward explained to Buchanan.

"Good," said Franklin. They were walking toward a long one-story structure with a porch running its length, on which four doors and four windows opened. Franklin referred to the plan in his hand.

"I see this used to be the quarters for married soldiers," he observed.

"Yes, sir," said Ward. "Four rooms, four mids in each room. Sixteen in all. Mostly of the 'forty date."

Franklin looked into one of the rooms. It contained four iron camp beds, four straight chairs and a table. An iron grate at the rear was the sole means of heating the place in winter. Two midshipmen were spreading straw mattresses and blankets on their beds; another was busy with hammer and nails and some scrap lumber building shelves against one of the walls. He stood up and touched his cap as he saw Franklin in the doorway.

"Afternoon, Mr. Simpson," said Franklin. "I see you're making yourself at home."

"Yes, sir." The midshipman's wide-spaced eyes were bright with suppressed amusement.

"What's so funny, Mr. Simpson?" demanded Ward.

"I was just wondering if we ought to make a sign for our new barracks, sir," he explained. "The four tall handsome lads in the next room are calling it 'Apollo Row' in tribute to their manly beauty. I think we're all entitled to share in the distinction. Don't you agree, sir?"

"Very amusing, Mr. Simpson," snapped Ward in the fashion of executive officers speaking to joke-cracking midshipmen over the Navy. "Don't start asking me questions or I'm likely to ask you where you got that lumber."

"No hammocks, eh?" grumbled Franklin as they walked along the porch of Apollo Row.

"The Army camp-beds were available, sir," said Ward. "If hammocks are required, it'll be necessary to make a requisition on the Navy Department."

"Use the beds," said Franklin quickly. "No requisitions that can possibly be avoided—not for a single dollar."

Next stop was a two-story frame building which had been the post hospital. "I've got sixteen men here, sir," Ward reported. "Eight upstairs and eight down; some of the 'forty-one date and a few of the youngsters."

"Any nickname yet?" Franklin asked.

"Poplar Row, I'm told," chuckled Ward. "Very original idea—from the trees there."

Nearby was a small brick building which had been the post bakehouse; a midshipman was tacking a neat canvas sign to the door casing. "Brandywine Cottage," read Franklin. "Eight gentlemen here. All from the good frigate *Brandywine*, mister?"

"Midshipman Wells, sir," reported the mid very solemnly. "Yes, sir. We've all been 'roaring Brandywines' at one time or another."

"Don't try any of your roaring tricks here, Mr. Wells," advised Franklin. "You might remind your messmates that

I was one of the 'roaring Javas' in the Mediterranean before you were born. If you make it necessary I can roar considerably louder than you can."

"Aye, aye, sir," said the awed midshipman, ducking hastily through the door.

"The 'roaring Brandywines' will be snug enough for the winter," Ward said, peering after the mid. "A good fire in the bake oven back there should keep the chill off nicely."

They passed under the fourteen-foot walls of the old fort that stood on the point where the Severn River joined the waters of Chesapeake Bay, walking along the river front past a towering mulberry tree.

"That shed against the south boundary wall, sir," said Ward, "used to be a blacksmith shop. I've had to quarter eight midshipmen there; they'll be a little more crowded than most of the others."

"And with a little less imagination," Franklin remarked. "They're moving in, but I don't see any sign over the door."

"Maybe not much imagination, but a lot of jabber," Ward observed. "Listen to 'em. We ought to call the place the 'Gas House.' "

Whether or not an alert midshipman ear caught the remark remains a mystery, but as the Gas House the little shack was thereafter known.

"One last port of call, sir," Ward announced. "Way over there against the west wall. It's the old gun-shed, fairly solidly built with the wall right at its back. Two rooms, four midshipmen in each with an entrance hall between. No name for the place yet, that I've heard of."

Midshipmen were busy in the former gun-shed as in the other quarters, arranging their beds, stowing sea bags neatly in the narrow hallway, sweeping the floor where the debris of years had accumulated.

"I must say you've managed very well with scanty resources, Mr. Ward," said Franklin as they turned away. "All the quarters need repair, of course. Floors rough and un-

even, boards missing; windows and doors that don't fit, except here in the gun-shed and the old bakehouse; no stowage for clothes and other gear except sea bags; no light for studying at night except tallow dips. I'd be more troubled about all that except that most of the young gentlemen are used to worse conditions at sea. Keeping discipline and order with people scattered in so many different places may be a difficulty; we'll have to depend a good deal on the older men, and on a strict daily routine that will keep all hands busy during most of their waking hours and send them to bed good and tired."

The daily routine started next morning.

School hours were from 8 A.M. to noon, and from 1:30 to 4:30 P.M. except that Saturday afternoon was left free. From noon to 1:30 P.M. and from 4:30 to 6 P.M. were set aside for meals and recreation. From 6 to 10 P.M. were study hours in quarters: no visiting. All lights were required to be out at 10:30. Midshipmen were presumed to have cleaned their quarters and had their breakfast by 8 A.M. every morning. They did not march to meals or studies, indeed there were no military formations at all. On weekdays they were not even required to wear uniforms. They simply reported themselves to their classrooms at 8 o'clock and at 1:30 or were marked "tardy."

Liberty to go outside the grounds was granted on Saturday only, except to those in "quarantine" for delinquency in studies or misconduct.

This was a tough routine, as Buchanan meant it to be. For the mids of the 1840 date, the examinations for promotion which were due in June, 1846, provided the principal incentive to hard study and attention to duty. The progress of each was reported on weekly, with a system of demerits which included both failures in study and offenses against discipline.

Those of the 1841 date had no such immediate incentive as the 1840's. They could not be promoted until 1847; also

they were liable to be ordered back to sea at any time. The school had little real hold on these 1841 lads; some behaved and worked hard because they wanted to improve themselves, others didn't. Others of the 1841 date who arrived from sea duty in batches from time to time soon found out from those already at the school what the situation was and conducted themselves according to their individual reaction to it.

Franklin had to work this out in the light of his understanding of the school's precarious hold on existence. It was not yet thought of, by most naval officers, as a permanent institution for the early education and training of midshipmen; rather it was simply a single convenient place to send mids who had completed their fifth year of service to cram for their examinations. True, it also had the task of giving one year of preliminary training to newly appointed "acting midshipmen," but this idea was not as yet firmly established. The resistance that had immediately been aroused by the proposal to extend this preliminary training to two years warned Franklin not to push for any change just now, and not to do anything else that would stir up too much criticism or attract too much attention—not, at any rate, until he had produced results which would enable the Secretary to point out to Congress the solid advantages of the system and ask that it be put on a permanent basis.

His immediate attention had to be fixed on the midshipmen of the 1841 date. Due to an 1842 law limiting the total number in service, very few had been appointed in 1842, and none at all in 1843 and 1844. After the June examinations of 1846, the chief source of students for the school would be those of the 1841 date as and when they became available to prepare for the next year's examination, plus newly appointed youngsters as these entered the service.

The latter gave little trouble. During their year as "acting midshipmen" they could be discharged at any time either for misconduct or idleness by a simple order of the Secretary.

There were a few failures, but most applied themselves to their studies, which were largely designed to improve their knowledge of mathematics enough to enable them to begin the study of navigation, together with courses in English grammar and composition, history and geography.

The 1840 date studied advanced mathematics, astronomy and navigation, gunnery, French or Spanish, and "natural philosophy"—which included mechanics, optics, electricity and especially the application of steam machinery to the propulsion of naval vessels. The latter subject could have been made far more interesting if a steamer had been made available to the school for practical instruction; but there were not then enough steam vessels in the Navy to make this possible.

As for the critical 1841 date, the Academic Board had to take each individual as a separate case and make such study assignments as seemed likely to help him most. The '41 men resented being required to study such hard and unusual subjects as steam and electricity, which they came to regard as "unsuitable" for sailors on the ground that no midshipman had ever been required to qualify in them before.

The smoldering discontent began to show itself seriously as winter came along. The loose doors and windows let in the snow and the rain, the wind blew out the candles, the grate fires in some of the quarters could not even melt the snow that accumulated on the floors.

Midshipmen took to climbing the wall at night, or making their way round the end of the west wall where it came down to the water's edge; this was not too difficult, but getting back undetected was something else. The grounds were patrolled by four watchmen, one of whom owned a large Newfoundland dog that had an unerring nose for midshipmen on the loose.

Franklin dealt sternly with those who were caught "frenching," as the mids called the offense: most sternly of all with those who showed signs of drunkenness. On the other hand

he winked at those who earned their Saturday liberty, used the occasion for a reasonable amount of revelry and returned before "lights out" at 10:30—a little merry, perhaps, but nothing worse.

Being himself well acquainted in Annapolis, where he and Nancy were in constant social demand, he knew very well what most of his young gentlemen were up to, at what houses they were received, how they behaved. He was not at all surprised one January Saturday just after dinner when Midshipman Simpson of Apollo Row came to see him with an unusual request.

"Sir," said Simpson, "the midshipmen of the 'forty date would respectfully ask your permission to give a ball in the recitation rooms so that we may have the privilege of entertaining all the people of the town who have been so kind to us since we have been here."

"I believe, Mr. Simpson," said Franklin gravely, "that you are the Grand Master of an organization known as the Spirits Club. No doubt your suggestion has its origin among the members of this group?"

"You know about the Spirits Club, sir?" gasped Simpson.

"I try to keep myself reasonably well informed, Mr. Simpson," said the superintendent. "I'm aware that some nine or ten of you go every Saturday evening to Matthews' Tavern on Main Street, where you consume quantities of terrapin and oysters, partake of a punch of which it is said that you yourself alone know the ingredients, and regale the neighborhood with song. Whereafter, Mr. Simpson, you form up your group on the sidewalk and march them back to the gate-house, at which you have never failed to arrive before the appointed time. I have no criticism of the Spirits Club, Mr. Simpson, but I should not approve of any undue amount of spirits being served as refreshments at any social affair within the limits of this school."

"Sir," said Simpson with an absolutely straight face, "if you will not give me away, I'll promise on this occasion to

mix a punch of which you will find no reason to complain. Of course, my fellow members will realize it is not quite up to their standards, but since all the men of the 'forty date have promised their support for the ball there will be no general disappointment to mar the gaiety of the evening."

"You may give your ball on any Saturday of your choice, Mr. Simpson," Franklin managed to say without laughing outright.

The ball was a great success, with guests attending from as far away as Washington, Baltimore and the Eastern Shore. Refreshments (including Simpson's denatured punch) were served in the mess hall, and so much enthusiasm was shown by the guests that the ball became an annual event in the years that followed.

Naturally the prestige of Apollo Row, where most of the members of the Spirits Club resided, was immensely inflated by this accomplishment. Their next-door neighbors in Poplar Row promptly renamed their own quarters "Rowdy Row" and did their best to live up to the new title in order to express their disdain for the "elegance" of the Apolloites. The "roaring Brandywines" in the former bake-shop became noisier, too. But in the gun-shed, over by the west wall, the inhabitants remained withdrawn and sedate. Never was there a gleam of light through a blanket-shaded window after hours, never a voice raised in song or the crash of a broken bottle. "A lot of monks, that's what they are," a scornful occupant of Rowdy Row pronounced. Thereupon the gun-shed became known as "The Abbey." Its inmates accepted the name without demur.

When this came to Franklin's notice, as most of the small currents of life at the Naval School did sooner or later, it stuck in his mind. There was something about it not quite midshipmanlike, especially as several of the young men in the Abbey were hardly distinguished either for scholarship or for exemplary conduct when not in their quarters. Occasionally the superintendent took it upon himself to make a



late-hour inspection of the grounds. One evening, he was strolling past the Abbey just as the watchman on duty knocked at the door with his call "Lights out, please, gentlemen!" The glow of candlelight in the Abbey's two rooms promptly disappeared.

Franklin walked on to the gatehouse, where the midshipman officer of the day was locking the gate. A glance at the liberty book showed that all midshipmen on liberty had duly checked in on time.

"Bring your lantern and come with me," said Franklin to the watchman, instinct born of his own midshipman days stirring within him. He opened the door of the Abbey, listened; not a sound. He took the lantern and went into the room on the right of the hallway. The lantern showed four neatly made beds, unoccupied, but not a single midshipman. Not a soul was in the other room, either. Yet not ten minutes ago someone had put candles out in both rooms. Certainly eight midshipmen hadn't come out the door since then; Franklin would have heard them, or if he hadn't the watchman's dog would.

"See if there's a loose floorboard anywhere, watchman," Franklin ordered. The thought in his mind was that there might be an undiscovered cellar under the gun-shed where mids could carouse undetected.

"Two of 'em, sir," the watchman reported. Franklin sniffed—fresh sea air was coming through where the watchman had lifted the boards. Below, the lantern light shone on a hole in the wall against which the Abbey was built, through which the lane outside the wall could be reached by a wriggling midshipman.

Thus was explained the claustral peace which had descended on the Abbey every evening at "lights out." Its occupants were out on the town enjoying themselves, with a secure means of getting in again at pleasure. Franklin was so pleased with the acuteness of his ex-midshipman instinct that no worse fate befell these ingenious youths than being

deprived of Saturday liberty for a spell—and, of course, having their hole-in-the-wall sealed up with solid stone and mortar.

But now a new wind of restlessness began stirring the minds of the midshipmen. There were rumors of war in the air, of war with Great Britain over the Oregon territory in the far northwest, of war with Mexico over Texas. Franklin Buchanan's warrior heart stirred too. He felt he could not bear to stay ashore if war should come, yet he felt also that his duty was to carry on the great work to which he had set his hand.

In April, 1846, Congress authorized the President to put an end to the agreement by which the United States and Great Britain held joint control of Oregon. The newspapers shrieked that this meant war unless the British gave up all claim to control of the region. Franklin was promptly inundated by applications from midshipmen for sea duty. He assembled the mids and gave them what they called a "war talk." Sternly he told those of the 1840 date that they would stay where they were until June and take their examinations; those of 1841—there were some thirty by now—could address their applications to the Secretary of the Navy if they saw fit, but Buchanan would make no recommendations. Meanwhile he expected attention to studies and no nonsense. He delivered these remarks with great vigor but not a wholly clear conscience, for he had himself written a cautiously worded letter to Secretary Bancroft suggesting that in case hostilities should appear imminent, he would like to be considered for a sea command "if and when that might seem possible to the Department and consistent with its other arrangements."

Three days later came a confidential letter from shrewd old Secretary Bancroft advising Commander Buchanan that newspaper reports of the imminence of war over Oregon were not to be taken seriously: "There is every reason to anticipate that the British will agree to the division of that

territory along the 49th parallel, and that we—after some congressional oratory—will accept. I wish I were as certain that we shall avoid blundering into a war with Mexico; General Zachary Taylor's army is advancing to the Rio Grande and I fear an armed clash may occur. I shall keep you informed, and shall have your personal interests and desires in mind at all times. Permit me, however, to beg you in your turn to keep in mind that you are laying foundations at Annapolis upon which the future security of our country may come in large measure to depend, perhaps in a struggle with a far more formidable foe than Mexico is ever likely to prove."

Thus gently rebuked, Franklin Buchanan went ahead with his work, putting out of his mind as definitely as he could the war rumors that continued to fill the newspapers. The midshipmen continued excitable. However, they were somewhat diverted from prospects of war by the irrepressible Midshipman Simpson, who, inspired by the success of his ball, organized a theatrical company among the 1840 men which had quite a notable success in two public performances at an old theater on Duke of Gloucester Street. Some of the more strait-laced townsfolk, however, were scandalized by all this gaiety and decided to pull down the aging theater and erect a church in its place.

Nancy Buchanan told this news to Franklin with considerable indignation. "The old fogies!" she cried. "Can't they bear to see anyone having fun? I mean to give a few of them a piece of my mind next Sunday."

"You might inform them," said Franklin with a quick grin, "that young Mr. Simpson has already heard a rumor of their intentions, and is going to write a letter to the papers in the name of his classmates claiming credit for having spread religious influences in the community of Annapolis."

"Oh, I hope you'll let him do it, Franklin!" exclaimed Nancy.

"Why not?" chuckled Franklin. "But I've some more se-

rious news for you, my dear. This morning I had another letter from Secretary Bancroft. The Navy appropriation bill comes up in Congress very shortly. It will contain the Navy Department's first formal proposal for an appropriation of money for this school. If it passes, the school has gained congressional recognition and a solid legal basis for future expansion. The Secretary was good enough to say that I've made a good record here so far—"

"I should think so!" Nancy cut in.

"—and," Franklin went on, "he wants to point with pride to what's been done this first year and to be able to assure the members of the Naval Committee that the school will continue during its next term under what he kindly refers to as my experienced and able guidance. In short, Nancy, the Secretary asks me to stay here as superintendent for at least one more full year after the end of this school term—that is, until the summer of 'forty-seven."

"Wonderful!" laughed Nancy. "I love it here, and I think you do too, Franklin, even though it's been something of a trial to you at times."

Franklin nodded, but said nothing.

"Franklin!" Nancy's voice held a hint of alarm. "Don't tell me you didn't write right back and say 'yes'?"

"I did," he admitted. "I felt it my duty. But—"

"But what?"

"But," he went on, "the Secretary also tells me—this in the strictest confidence—that the President is determined on a war with Mexico, and will very likely have his way within a few weeks. He knew how I'd feel about being stuck ashore with a war going on. That's why he wanted my assurance that I'd stay anyway."

"Oh, Franklin!" wailed Nancy. "I know what that decision means to you, dear—and, of course, you know I'd never come between you and your duty, even if it took you to war. But I'm glad you decided as you did, just the same."

"The Secretary played fair and square with me, Nancy,"

said Franklin. "He didn't have to tell me that war was almost sure to come. The papers have been full of rumors, of course, but most opinion's been that it'll all blow over, like the Oregon war scare did. However, I've set my hand to this task, and I won't leave it half done."

## 8

The Needs of War  
Come First

ALL THAT LONG SUMMER OF 1846, WHILE THE NATION FLAMED with excitement at the news of war with Mexico, while volunteers drilled in streets of every village, while General Zachary Taylor began winning victory after victory and Commodore Conner's squadron blockaded the Mexican coast—and while every midshipman at Annapolis thought of nothing but getting where he could smell burnt powder—Franklin Buchanan stuck grimly to his post and hid his aching heart behind the stern mask of duty.

June came, and with it the Board of Examiners: four graying commodores and captains, themselves past much hope of active service, plus Captain Matthew Calbraith Perry, now in the prime of life, growing blustery and pompous of manner yet with keen intelligence and stout spirit showing in all he said and did, and with his sea orders in his pocket, sending him to the Gulf of Mexico as a commodore, second-in-command to Commodore Conner, as soon as the examinations should be over.

"I'm taking the *Mississippi* down to the Gulf," he told Franklin. "I expect Conner will be coming home before long; his health's failing. I'm to succeed him in command of the squadron. I've applied for you to command the *Mis-*

*issippi* when I hoist my blue broad pennant, but the Secretary wasn't encouraging. Says he needs you here."

This was like offering raw meat to a hungry tiger and then snatching it back. Franklin masked his feelings behind a calm face and explained the reasons why he had promised to stay at the school.

"There aren't many men with your fighting instincts who could have put the Navy's future ahead of their own like that," approved Perry. "But don't give up hope—the war will last through 'forty-seven if not longer. Taylor can't do much more; he's outrunning his supplies already and he has no real understanding of modern warfare. There's only one soldier we've got who can win this war—Winfield Scott. He wants to take an army by sea to Vera Cruz and fight his way to Mexico City. Sooner or later the President will have to let him try and that means plenty of work for the Navy as well as the Army."

"Why not sooner?" demanded Franklin.

"Because our good Democratic President doesn't want to build up a war hero Whig candidate to run against him in 1848," Perry answered. "Scott has political ambitions and makes no secret of them. So the President lets the best soldier in the country sit there in Washington shuffling papers. But he'll have to come round to Scott in the end—next spring, most likely. By that time maybe we can have you at sea to lend a hand in the attack on Vera Cruz."

The board dealt swiftly with the midshipmen of the 1840 date, most of whom passed without much trouble; all were at sea within a few weeks. The acting midshipmen were examined for their permanent warrants and sent to sea too; many of the 1841 date had already gone or were under orders to go.

Franklin was kept busy through July with the paper work of graduation, sea orders and the writing of his annual report. With early August came a triumphant letter from Secretary Bancroft: the Appropriation Bill had passed with

the carefully worded item providing money for the school intact. Fifty midshipmen of the 1841 date were ordered from sea duty to report at Annapolis in October to study for their exams, and new acting midshipmen could be taken into service. Best of all, Franklin was authorized to proceed with the construction of a new building containing a kitchen, mess hall and "athenaeum" (lecture hall and library), thus freeing the whole of the old barracks for classrooms. He was also to lay the foundations for a hospital, enlarge midshipmen's and officers' quarters, and prepare plans for a new and substantial row of buildings to quarter a hundred additional midshipmen.

"I am now prepared to have the gentlemen of the Congress start thinking of the school as a permanent establishment," the Secretary wrote. "Hence I hope that by October or November you can have much of the new work finished, or well advanced. When Congress convenes for the fall session, I expect to bring a visiting committee to Fort Severn."

So Franklin Buchanan had plenty to occupy his time that summer and very little chance for a holiday at The Rest. More cares came to him in August as the mids of the '41 date began returning from sea to go to school while their messmates fought the war. Some of these lads had seen a little fighting along the Mexican coast already, and were not happy about the change. Professor Lockwood, the ex-West Pointer, suggested to Franklin that a little military drill might put some snap into the careless bearing of these young warriors.

"I don't know how they'll take to that, Professor Lockwood," said Franklin doubtfully. "You've seen some service afloat, so you'll be aware of the ingrained dislike of seamen for anything they think is soldiering. You can drill 'em as boarders, or at the guns, or aloft, but marching in step and dressing by the right they leave to the marines."

"I was with Commodore Jones at Monterey in 'forty-two,



sir," Lockwood answered. "The Commodore felt it necessary to land a party and take possession of the Mexican custom house. We had only a handful of marines, so we had to use seamen. The Commodore made me adjutant of the landing force, because of my West Point training; and, sir, the result was a shambles!"

"A shambles, sir!" he repeated, and when he was excited, he stuttered. "Against any kind of organized opposition, we'd've met with disaster! Now look at Mexico—all along the east coast, little seaports through which arms are brought in. Not enough ships for a proper blockade. So what's to be done? Landing parties—seize the ports and shut them off. Commodore Conner's tried it twice. Both failures. Reason? No proper training. Let me make a start here, sir. Infantry drill and light artillery. Good for discipline, yes. But there's a real military need for it too!"

Franklin was impressed. "You just could be right, Professor," he agreed. "Go ahead."

Next day Professor Lockwood had a platoon of mids out for drill, equipped with the old Army muskets that were stored in Fort Severn.

How they hated being drilled like "sojers"! The very idea was repulsive to their nautical minds. They dropped their muskets, marched the wrong way on purpose, did everything they could think of to make Lockwood's life a burden to him. Whenever he was within hearing they chanted an age-old Navy slogan: "A messmate before a shipmate, a shipmate before a stranger, a stranger before a dog, but a dog before a sojer!"

One day when Franklin was watching from the porch of his quarters, the mids were drilling with one of the small howitzers that were used to accompany landing parties. These were pulled along by a drag-rope, manned by twenty men.

"Double quick time—March!" yelled Lockwood in his high-pitched voice.

The mids hauling the little cannon broke into a trot. They were headed right for the sea wall.

"Section—ha-ha-ha—"

Lockwood was trying to give the order "Halt!" but he couldn't quite get it out. Over the sea wall and down into the shallow water went the happy midshipmen, spreading out to right and left as they jumped. The gun and its limber plunged after them with a tremendous splash.

Naturally Lockwood saw to it that they spent the rest of the morning laboring with spars and tackle to hoist the gun back to terra firma again. They didn't mind the extra work, that was a proper task for sailors!

Lockwood kept right on with his program of drills, with the superintendent's steady support. The enthusiasm of the young West Pointer was infectious: Franklin himself took time out to study General Scott's *Abridged Tactics for Infantry* and some notes compiled by Lieutenant Dahlgren of the Navy on the handling of light artillery pieces ashore. He found these unaccustomed subjects fascinating, and wrote some notes of his own on the application of these principles to practical situations which might be encountered in using seamen for landing duties.

The use of landing forces was certainly a very important part of the U. S. Navy's duties, and there were almost never enough marines available to do the job. The total strength of the Marine Corps was only 1,200 men, and these were scattered all over the world in little detachments aboard ship, or used to guard Navy yards ashore. For any important object, seamen would have to be used in order to have enough force to be sure of success. So seamen, like it or not, ought to have the necessary training as "sojers."

Franklin put this all in writing, with specific application to the needs of the current war with Mexico, and sent a copy of his notes to Secretary Bancroft. He was well aware that Bancroft had opposed any increase in the Marine Corps; he

might, therefore, be receptive to training seamen to do the work of marines in emergencies.

No comment from the Secretary, but meanwhile the building program went ahead full blast, and with Lieutenant Ward and the professors, Franklin began planning the academic program which was to get under way in October.

In early September came a thunderbolt in the form of a letter from Secretary Bancroft. President Polk, he wrote, had asked him to resign as Secretary of the Navy and to accept appointment as Minister to Great Britain. His successor would be John Y. Mason of Virginia, who had been Secretary of the Navy in the preceding administration and hadn't shown much interest in midshipman education, as Franklin recalled. However, Bancroft had his promise that he would take the Naval School under his special care. Bancroft had also spoken to the President, who had assured his own firm support of the school. With that, Franklin had to be content. But he wasn't happy about it. He had sort of counted on Secretary Bancroft's help. Now, if trouble came—

There was trouble at old Fort Severn in plenty as the winter dragged along. The mids of the '41 date continued to resent their "sojer" drill. They constantly smuggled liquor into their quarters; this led to some fierce quarrels, and to several duels. Though Franklin was not able to bring these offenses home to the participants, he did recommend one midshipman for dismissal because of his "savage and ungovernable temper"—yes, Franklin had a temper himself, but also he had learned to govern it. He dropped another mid on the ground that he was "incorrigibly idle, so that further effort expended on him will be wasted." And upon proven drunkenness he was merciless. Secretary Mason backed his rulings without any quibbling.

Through it all the calm, steady Lieutenant Ward, the school's executive officer, was a tower of strength. So were the professors of the Academic Board—Chauvenet, Lock-

wood, Girault and Chaplain Jones. It was these men, under Franklin Buchanan's leadership, who laid patiently, stone by stone, the foundations of the Naval Academy—and their work has endured.

But it was not easy for Franklin Buchanan to stand fast and do his duty that winter while elsewhere other men wearing the same uniform were fighting their country's battles. A great joint operation by the Army and Navy against the port of Vera Cruz with Mexico City as the ultimate objective was in the making. On November 30, General Winfield Scott sailed from New York for New Orleans to take command. Franklin realized that Calbraith Perry's prophecy was coming true.

At The Rest, Nancy was expecting another baby, and Franklin made several anxious trips home. On February 16, Franklin Buchanan Junior—the only son of that long and happy marriage—was born. Franklin lingered proudly at The Rest until Nancy ordered him back to Annapolis, saying she couldn't stand the sight of him fidgeting around the house.

The day after he returned to the Naval School came another bolt from the blue, in the form of a curt order from Secretary Mason:

"You will turn over the superintendency of the Naval School to the line officer next in rank and proceed immediately to the Navy yard, Gosport, Virginia, where you will take command of the sloop-of-war *Germantown*. When ready for sea, you will proceed to the Gulf of Mexico and report for duty to the commodore commanding the U. S. naval forces in the vicinity of Vera Cruz."

Here it was—release from frustration, a passport to glory. Many a man would have snatched at the opportunity, silencing conscience with the answer "Orders are orders." Franklin Buchanan stamped down the surge of wild exultation and reached for his pen to explain to Mr. Secretary Mason why he could not honorably accept the command for which

he longed. But he had barely dipped quill in ink when the lightning bolt from Washington was followed, appropriately enough, by a roll of thunder—the rumbling voice of Matthew Calbraith Perry, who came marching into Franklin's study all mud-stained from the road.

"Commodore!" cried Franklin, jumping up. "I thought you were in the Gulf!"

"Had to bring *Mississippi* to Norfolk to have her machinery overhauled," boomed Perry. "Six weeks, they said. Two weeks, I told 'em. Two weeks it is. Meanwhile I've been improving my time making the Secretary acquainted with the facts of life. Including the central fact that Commodore Conner's unfit for any sea duty, let alone command of a squadron in wartime. He's a brave man and a fine seaman, but he's also become a confirmed invalid. His old wound keeps him in daily torment; he's unable to weigh risks coolly or make up his mind in a pinch. So Conner's finished, and I go back to the Gulf to take command and see Scott's army safely ashore."

"Poor old Conner," said Franklin. He was more than a little shocked at Perry's ruthlessness, but Perry had never been one to allow another man to stand in the way of his ambition. Ursa Major—the Big Bear—he was called in the Navy, and the name fitted him.

"Poor old Conner be damned!" Perry shot back. "This is war, man! The Navy can't get a black eye because Conner's not up to his work! And there'll be rough work to do in the Gulf this spring—work that'll need the best the Navy has to offer. Including you, my friend."

"I promised Secretary Bancroft I'd stand by and see the Navy School safely past the political rocks and shoals, Commodore," Franklin answered.

"I thought as much," said Perry. "Very proper sentiment. I'm as strong for the Navy School as you or Bancroft, and you know it. I was sure you'd think it your duty to stay on here. But you're needed in the Gulf, and the needs of war

come first. It's to make you understand that fact, sir, that I've ridden thirty miles over the most appalling roads I've seen in years."

"It does my heart good to hear you say all that, Com-modore," said Franklin, "but surely there are plenty of officers who can command a sloop-of-war as capably as I can."

"No doubt, no doubt," Perry retorted. "But name me one other who's been studying the tactics of landing parties as you have?"

Franklin stared, at a loss for a quick answer.

"The Department sent me a copy of your notes on the subject," grinned Perry. "We've already had a couple of nasty setbacks at Alvarado and Tabasco precisely because no one else had worked out those details. I could get a dozen good captains for *Germantown*, as you say; but you're the only one I can find who's given any thought to making soldiers out of bluejackets. There'll be coastal operations in plenty—I've got three or four in mind right now. As for marines, all I have is a handful—less than two hundred. So I need a senior naval officer who can handle sailors ashore. Giving you *Germantown* is the handiest way to get you to the Gulf. You've no choice, man: it's your plain and bounden duty. Let me say again—the needs of war come first."

"No naval officer could argue otherwise," said Franklin. "But still—what happens to this school, for which I'm presently responsible?"

"I've anticipated your very proper anxiety by exacting a firm promise from the Secretary to appoint a good man to take your place. While he's looking for one, I suppose Lieutenant Ward can carry on?"

"Nobody better," agreed Franklin. His warrior heart sang within him, he could honestly tell himself that this call of duty was indeed not to be resisted. And yet—

"Furthermore," Perry was saying, "remember this—when the war's won and the Navy's borne its full share in the victory, those of us who have commanded in the operations

will have some claim to be listened to. I'll make it my business to see that the Naval School takes no harm. In fact, I'll join with you to find ways of improving it."

What could Franklin say after that?

STANDING ON THE FOREDECK OF THE LITTLE SIDE-WHEEL steamer *Spitfire* as she chugged steadily upstream in the early sunshine of an April morning, Commander Franklin Buchanan watched eagerly for the first sight of the enemy. This sluggish brown current was the Tuxpan River; ahead, three forts barred the way to the town of Tuxpan. The forts were armed with guns salvaged by the Mexicans from the U. S. armed brig *Truxtun*, which had been wrecked on Tuxpan bar in August, 1846, by one of the sudden squalls for which this coast was notorious. That these American guns should remain in enemy hands was an affront the commodore's pride could not tolerate; moreover Tuxpan was the last port between Vera Cruz and the Rio Grande which still flew the Mexican flag. Vera Cruz itself was firmly held by the U. S. Army; the city had been taken March 29, three days before the *Germantown* arrived there, and was now the base for Scott's advance toward Mexico City, already in progress.

It was the Navy's job to prevent any outside help being smuggled to the Mexicans, and Perry had gathered a "Mosquito Fleet" of little steamers to spearhead his attacking forces. The Navy was fighting its first war of the age of steam. Perry, an apostle of steam long left to wander in the wilderness of official neglect and tarry conservatism, was happily proving how right he had been all along.



This morning he was using three steamers. The *Spitfire* was towing a small schooner and ten ship's boats, including three from the *Germantown*. Behind her came two other steamers, *Vixen* and *Scourge*, each with a similar tow. Steamers, schooners and boats were packed with nearly 1,500 men of Commodore Perry's newly organized Naval Brigade, which Franklin had been drilling for the past two weeks on the sand flats near the fleet rendezvous at Anton Lizardo Bay, just south of Vera Cruz. He couldn't claim they were thoroughly disciplined infantry and artillery, but at least they were organized into companies and regiments, each with a due complement of officers; they could be maneuvered under fire; and they knew how to handle their weapons.

This too was something brand-new in the history of the U. S. Navy. Never before had such an organized force of seamen and marines been landed on a hostile shore to assault land fortifications. Franklin was happy that luck had allowed him to have a share in it. He didn't mind at all that the commodore had seized upon his ideas, absorbed them, taken them for his own and would get the lion's share of the credit if they were successful; that was Perry's way, and after all it would be Perry who would bear the responsibility of any failure. Franklin was just glad that he'd had time to do a fairly good job of organizing and drilling, and that all hands had responded so surprisingly well to the unfamiliar instruction. He only hoped that when they were under fire they would remember their lessons.

Each company of about fifty men was commanded by a lieutenant or a passed midshipman, with two midshipmen as assistants. A few of the latter had learned a little drill at the Naval School and were now ready to acknowledge that there was some good in "sojer business" after all, for wasn't that the reason they were getting a chance to take part in a fight? The two regiments of seaman infantry were commanded by Captains Breese and Forrest; Commander Mackenzie was in charge of the artillery; there was a small bat-

talion of marines under Captain Edson of that corps, while Franklin himself commanded four companies of seaman infantry which could be used in support of the artillery or as a general reserve. This assignment kept him close to Commodore Perry's headquarters, where he acted as a sort of "military advisor" or senior staff officer to his chief—for Matthew Calbraith Perry was the last man in the world to launch an expedition of this magnitude without taking command of it in person.

There he stood now beside Commander Tattnall, the *Spitfire's* skipper. Franklin knew that the commodore's heart was swelling with pride as he looked back along the long column of steamers and their tows, gay with the brightly colored signal flags which designated each company and with the boat ensigns which proudly announced that here came an American flotilla, while above the commodore's head his blue broad pennant fluttered on the *Spitfire's* pole mast. It was a panorama to stir the blood of a fighting man, as it surely stirred Franklin's. And the commodore's. Their eyes met; a broad grin spread over the commodore's meaty face.

"I'm glad you wrote those notes about landing forces, Buchanan," he sang out, "and I'll bet a month's pay you're glad too!"

Franklin's ready answer was lost in the sudden roar of cannon fire. The brow of La Peña hill, where the first Mexican fort was located, was shrouded in gray smoke. Three fountains of water leaped from the surface of the river fifty feet ahead of *Spitfire*.

"Silence those guns, Captain Tattnall!" barked the commodore.

*Spitfire's* bow gun, a short thirty-two-pounder on a pivot mount, was already being hauled round by the tacklemen. "Fire!" yelled a black-eyed lieutenant. The little steamer shuddered under the impact of the recoil as the gun slammed back against its heavy manila breeching. "Sponge and load!" Through the smoke Franklin could see the half-naked

gunners springing to their tasks. Another gun roared farther aft.

"Stand by to cast off the tow!" the commodore shouted.

Signal flags went fluttering aloft. Franklin, the lust of battle hot in his veins, longed to be with his men in the boats, but it was his assigned duty to stand by the commodore and observe the progress of the landing.

Here came *Vixen*, her tow already cast off, smoke pouring from her funnel, paddles churning, guns ablaze. Above La Peña hill the morning sky blossomed with shellbursts, white against the blue. On *Vixen's* foredeck a young officer waved gaily to Franklin—Passed Midshipman Simpson, as eager for battle as he had been for dancing or play-acting.

"Haul down!" the commodore ordered, and *Spitfire* too surged forward, released from the drag of the tow.

"Land and storm the fort!" came the commodore's command.

Now the brown river surface swarmed with boats, pulling lustily for shore while the men in them shouted their battle-cries.

"Fort's opened fire again, sir!" yelled Lieutenant Porter.

Crash! The little steamer shook under the impact of a mighty blow. White splinters flew. Commander Tattnall was down, bleeding. "Ready—fire!" shouted Porter, his gun roaring defiance.

His glasses steady at his eyes, Franklin watched the first boats smashing their way through the reeds to the muddy river bank, watched the white-clad seamen leap out and wade ashore, bayoneted muskets held high above their heads. An officer's sword flashed in the sun. Here and there little splashes of white were already starting up the hill.

Keep your companies together! begged Franklin mentally, trying to project his thoughts to those distant lieutenants and midshipmen. Don't let the men straggle like that! Oh, Lord, they're scattered all over the hillside, no formation, no sort of order.

The fort had stopped firing. Up the hill went the sailors, white dots and patches—meaning single men or little groups together. A distant cheer came back across the water.

And then all *Spitfire's* men were cheering, too, for the red-white-green tricolor of Mexico was coming down from the flagstaff of the fort. An instant later the Stars and Stripes rose in its place; the redoubt of La Peña had been taken by storm, however disorderly the assault had been!

"Well done!" gloated the commodore. "Signal *Scourge* to pick up her tow again and make for the next fort. We mustn't give the enemy time to recover from the first shock."

Commander Tattnell, grinning fiercely as the surgeon's steward twisted tight the tourniquet on his wounded arm, shouted for half speed. *Spitfire* swerved inshore to pick up her own boats and follow *Scourge*. By the time *Spitfire* caught up, the men from *Scourge's* boats had overrun the water battery at Palmasola. *Spitfire* and *Vixen*—"the two Pollies," the men of the squadron called them for some queer sailor reason—thrashed on past the cheering victors and rounded the bend which brought the town of Tuxpan into sight.

Again the boats were cast off. The steamers went ahead, guns slamming away at the last fort on a high hill just south of the town. The Mexican garrison didn't wait to be driven out by the landing force; they took to their heels.

So Tuxpan was captured "at the gallop," as the commodore said a little later, standing amid the disorder of Mexican General Cos' abandoned dining room with wine bottles and cigars scattered among the overturned chairs. "A smart operation, gentlemen," he added. "The Naval Brigade came through like veterans."

Franklin wasn't so cocky. To his mind, the Naval Brigade had fallen into utter disorder the moment it hit the beach. From then on it had looked pretty much like an armed mob to his critical eye. He couldn't help wondering what would happen if it ran into real opposition or had to make a long

march under the Mexican sun in the presence of the enemy.

He found out on the Tabasco River, south of Vera Cruz, in June. The objective was the fortified town of San Juan Batista, about seventy-five miles up the river, and the enemy force was twice as strong as at Tuxpan. The brigade turned in a job of work that made Franklin's heart beat with pride. Finding the river obstructed, they were landed on the bank, swept away two Mexican attempts at resistance, marched briskly on the town and took it. Perry, in his report, gave Franklin's training and leadership of the Naval Brigade a full share of credit.

The capture of San Juan Batista was the last big fight of the war for Perry's squadron. Every Mexican port on the Gulf was now controlled; a dull season of coast-watching and chasing would-be blockade runners followed. Yellow fever broke out on the *Mississippi*; she had to be sent to Pensacola, while the commodore shifted his broad pennant to the *Germantown*. Mexico City was taken by General Winfield Scott's army in September; peace negotiations began shortly afterward. Franklin Buchanan was happy enough to be at sea, and in command, though he would have preferred a steamer rather than a sailing ship like the *Germantown*.

He was especially interested in the steam sloop-of-war *Princeton*, the first warship in the world to be driven by a screw propeller at the stern instead of paddle wheels at the sides. The advantages of the screw propeller appealed to Franklin's common sense: there was more room for guns, since a great part of both broadsides did not have to be devoted to the giant paddle wheels, as in the *Mississippi*; and the machinery could be placed lower in the hull, being therefore less vulnerable to enemy fire. Thinking about this latter advantage, it occurred to Franklin that a propeller-driven ship might be made even less vulnerable by affixing iron armor-plate to her sides: but when he tried to work out the extra weight that would be involved it seemed to him to be prohibitive.

He visited the *Princeton* at Vera Cruz and talked with her engineers, who told him that her highly efficient screw propeller was the brain child of a Swedish-born inventor, John Ericsson. The name meant nothing to Franklin at the time, though he was to have occasion to remember it later, along with his early ideas about armor for ships of war.

Anyway the war was over; there might not be another one for years. Franklin welcomed orders to sail for a home port. He arrived at the Gosport (Norfolk) Navy Yard on February 16, 1848, and a week later was granted three months' leave, notice of which arrived with a letter of commendation from Secretary Mason, for which he knew he had to thank Commodore Perry's reports of his services in Mexico. He was relieved of command of the *Germantown* by his friend Commander Charles Lowndes, and caught the first bay steamer en route to Baltimore and The Rest.

The joys of homecoming drove every other thought from his mind for a while. Besides his beloved wife Nancy, there were six little girls to welcome him now, and Franklin Junior, whom he remembered only as a little pink baby in a crib, was a year old and a very energetic toddler. Nancy and the older girls had to hear all Daddy's war stories over and over, and there were guests at dinner almost every evening for the first two or three weeks. Among the earliest of these were Lieutenant Ward and Professors Lockwood and Chauvenet from the Naval School. All, especially Lockwood, roared with delight at Franklin's account of his adventures with the Naval Brigade, but Franklin was far less delighted with their report on how matters were going at the Naval School. The new superintendent, Commander George Upshur, was not a strict disciplinarian, and the midshipmen were getting out of hand, especially the bold young war hawks now arriving in increasing numbers from the squadron in the Gulf.

"If you think the lads used to be restless about having to drill three times a week," said Lockwood, "you should see these latest arrivals. A few of them served with your landing

force and aren't too much of a problem; but the others, who stayed afloat all during the war, are almost in a state of mutiny."

Franklin promised to write to Commodore Perry, who was due in Washington shortly, reminding him of his promise to take care of the school; but 1848 turned out to be no year in which the general interests of the Navy or the particular interests of the Naval School could get much attention from the Congress. The country was wild with excitement over the vast expansion of American territory which had been wrung from Mexico on the battlefield. Northern and Southern politicians were in a bitter wrangle as to whether the newly won lands should be "free soil" or should be added to the area where slavery was recognized.

Like most officers of the Army and Navy, Franklin kept aloof from this partisan bitterness. He knew that the slavery question was beginning to divide the country. He had no hard-and-fast convictions on the subject. His native Maryland was a slave state, of course. Franklin himself owned half a dozen slaves. He did not think their lot a hard one, indeed a Maryland landowner who did not look after the comfort and well-being of his slaves would have quickly felt the stern disapproval of his neighbors. Let the politicians work out the constitutional problem. Perhaps slavery would have to go one day. So be it, if that is what the majority want. But let it be done, if done it ever is, within the framework of the Constitution and the laws. All this abolitionist fury in the North, all this bitter resentment in the South, is needless and wrong-headed. Thus ran the views of Franklin Buchanan on the slavery problem, and those of many others who wore the uniform of the United States.

But 1848 was an election year, and of bitter talk there was aplenty before November came. The election was won by the Whigs, with General Zachary Taylor as their candidate. "Let the dust settle," said Perry to Franklin Buchanan, thinking not about slavery but the future of the Navy, "and then

we'll see. The new steam frigates will help stir popular interest in the Navy when they're completed next year."

In January, 1849, Franklin was ordered to command the Baltimore Naval Station, and in July was a member of the annual Board of Examiners at the Naval School. Meanwhile he had been busily corresponding with Perry and other friends about the school, and again the commodore proved a good prophet, for both interest in the new steamers and in the California trade—plus the excitement over the discovery of gold in that state—put the Navy back on the front pages.

A strong recommendation by the Academic Board for a complete revision of the regulations and the scheme of instruction at the Naval School was promptly followed by the appointment of a special Board of Officers for that purpose, headed by Commodore Shubrick (who had commanded the Pacific Squadron during the latter part of the war). The other members were Commanders Franklin Buchanan, S. F. Du Pont and George Upshur, with Professor Chauvenet and the Superintendent of the Military Academy, Captain Brewerton.

The new regulations had a strong element of West Point discipline in them. No clubs, no eating or playing cards in quarters, no week-end liberty, everybody in uniform all the time, drill every day, march to and from meals and classes—and a whole new scheme of demerits for every offense, 200 demerits in any year meaning prompt dismissal. The academic term was now to be two years at Annapolis for newly appointed "acting midshipmen," followed by three years at sea and then back to school for two more years before final examination for promotion. The curriculum was broadened to establish a regular progression in each subject. Finally, the name of the school was to be changed to the United States Naval Academy as of July 1, 1850.

Franklin was on the Board of Examiners again in June, 1850, and saw the vigorous Commander C. K. Stribling, who



had been Commodore Shubrick's Fleet Captain in the Pacific Squadron, take over as Superintendent.

That summer Franklin had two good reasons to rejoice—in August, the birth of another daughter, Rosa; and in September the adoption of further recommendations of the Academic Board that the course should be changed to a straight four years at the school, as Franklin had long believed necessary, with summer practice cruises to provide practical instruction in seamanship. The pattern of Academy life that has endured ever since was set.

But the pattern of Franklin Buchanan's naval career was changing again even as he finished his work with the board. Across the Pacific, that ocean on the shores of which the United States was now firmly established, lay the hermit empire of Japan, still living in the Middle Ages with its ports closed to all direct contact with the rest of the world. To awaken the rulers of the Empire to the advantages of commercial relations with the United States was a project long considered and often attempted without success. Now it was to be given into the hands of a man who never knew how to take "No" for an answer—Commodore Matthew Calbraith Perry, "Old Bruin." Once again came a summons from the imperious commodore to the officer he had come to trust above all others: Franklin Buchanan.

"STOP BOTH ENGINES!" BARKED COMMANDER FRANKLIN Buchanan.

Deep in the bowels of the steam frigate *Susquehanna* a gong clanged; the beat of the huge thirty-one-foot paddle wheels ceased.

"Commodore to squadron—come to anchor," ordered Commodore Perry, standing beside Franklin on the bridge that spanned the deck between the two high rounded paddle boxes.

A string of varicolored signal flags soared aloft.

The *Susquehanna* and the other three ships of the squadron—the steam frigate *Mississippi* and two sailing sloops-of-war, *Saratoga* and *Plymouth*—were now about half a mile offshore, gliding ever more slowly through the blue waters of Uraga Bay.

"Stand by the port anchor!" hailed Franklin through his speaking trumpet. A number of Japanese were running along the beach toward a white-walled building with eaves upturned at the corners. The setting sun twinkled on steel as they ran—soldiers, probably. Several good-sized boats had already put off from shore and were rowing toward the ships. They were full of men; steel glittered among them too.

"Haul down!" snapped the commodore.

"Let go the port anchor!" roared Franklin.

The cable rumbled out through the hawse-hole as the three-and-a-half-ton anchor plunged into the water.

"See my orders strictly carried out, if you please, Captain Buchanan," directed the commodore. "I'll be in my cabin if you need me."

"Aye aye, sir."

Franklin grinned at the broad blue back of the commodore as the great man lumbered down the bridge ladder. It was just like Old Bruin to insist on wearing a blue frock coat, with cocked hat and epaulets, in this sweltering heat. Every other officer in the ship, including Franklin, was comfortable in loose-fitting white jackets and straw hats.

The approaching boats would not be within hail for twenty minutes. Franklin had time for a last check-up to make sure everything was in readiness for whatever might happen. This was the eighth of July, 1853; he had been in command of the *Susquehanna* since November of the preceding year, when he had joined her at Hong Kong. She was a brand-new steam frigate, commissioned in 1851—250 feet long, with two powerful engines and a fine spread of sail as well. She could work up to a speed of twelve knots under steam alone, which was fast going for those days. Franklin was enormously proud of her, and proud, too, of the mission of which she was the flagship.

That mission, simply stated, was to use a careful mixture of diplomacy and force to open the doors which Japan had for centuries kept shut against the rest of the world. Foreign ships—except for one Dutch ship each year which was allowed to come to Nagasaki—could not enter Japanese ports. Seamen unlucky enough to be wrecked on Japan's frequently stormy coast were imprisoned and cruelly maltreated until the next annual visit of the Dutch ship and then deported in her. This was becoming especially irksome to the rising American whaling industry, which had lost several ships recently in Japanese waters. Beyond that was the conviction in American commercial circles that trade with Japan could provide as

fine a source of profit as trade with China, if only the Japanese could be brought to see reason.

Commodore Perry had not been too pleased when it was first suggested that he should undertake this difficult mission. He had no wish to have his name associated with failure, and in this matter he had seen small chance of success. But as he studied the problem, he had begun to change his mind; doubt had gradually changed to enthusiasm. Perry and his chosen officers had spent well over a year absorbing every scrap of information that was available about Japan and the Japanese from European, American and Chinese sources. They had come to the conclusion that the Japanese were a proud, rank-conscious, ceremonious people who could be dealt with only by never allowing them to put a visitor in a position of inferiority. The entering wedge, Perry decided, would be the steamers: as far as Perry could discover, no steamers had ever visited Japanese waters up to this time.

When the squadron had first sighted the Japanese coast, shortly after daybreak on this eighth of July, 1853, the two steam frigates had furled every scrap of canvas, proceeding thereafter under steam alone, towing the sailing ships. It was in this fashion that the squadron had entered Uraga Bay and come to anchor in sight of the Japanese on the shore. Now came the first test, for which the procedures had been carefully worked out in advance.

The leading boat would be within hail in five more minutes, Franklin estimated as he finished his quick tour of the spar deck. The *Susquehanna*, like the other ships, had been cleared for action before entering the bay. Her gunports were ready to trice up, guns loaded, ammunition scuttles open and six rounds of grapeshot handy by each gun. Small arms (muskets, pistols, cutlasses and boarding pikes) were ready to hand in the racks between the guns, and around the foot of each mast. Boarding nettings of tarred ropes were rigged to prevent any attempt by the Japanese to climb aboard without permission. This had happened during a previous visit

by a squadron of sailing ships under Commodore Biddle, and Perry, after careful study of Biddle's report, had concluded that the Americans had lost face as a result.

"They'll be curious as to what goes on inside a steamer to make her go," Perry had said. "We'll tell them that the interior of our ships is forbidden to all strangers."

"And you, Commodore," Franklin had proposed, "will be known as the Lord of the Forbidden Interior!"

Perry had laughed with the others, but if Franklin wasn't much mistaken the idea of being entitled the Lord of the Forbidden Interior had made quite a hit with the commodore.

In support of this conception, no distinctive marks of rank were now visible among those officers and men whom the approaching Japanese could see.

"Better give them a hail, Mr. Godon," said Franklin to his executive officer. The order was passed along; an elderly quartermaster, standing in the gangway, hailed loudly:

"Boats ahoy-y-y!"

No answer. The boats kept coming.

"Sheer off!" yelled the quartermaster.

The boats kept right on.

"Run out the guns," ordered Franklin.

Up flew the heavy wooden gunports. There was a rumble of wheels on the deck planking as the grim muzzles of the *Susquehanna's* guns came into view. The oarsmen in the boats stopped rowing. In the stern sheets of the leading boat, a man in a white shirt and blue trousers stood up, cupped his hands and hailed.

"He's speaking Dutch, Captain," reported S. Wells Williams, the commodore's interpreter, a missionary from Canton. "He says he wants to come aboard."

"Ask him who he is."

After some guttural give-and-take, the missionary said the man in the boat had identified himself as the harbor master and insisted on his right to inspect any barbarian ship that

came unbidden into waters which were the property of his Emperor. He demanded to talk to the captain.

"Tell him," directed Franklin, "that the interior of these ships is forbidden to strangers and to all persons of no consequence. Tell him that the Lord of the Forbidden Interior cannot be seen, much less spoken to by a harbor master. He is so exalted a person that it would be impossible for him even to think about one so lowly as a harbor master."

More give-and-take, with gestures.

"He says the vice-governor of Uraga is in the boat. Can the vice-governor come aboard?"

"It is just possible that the Lord of the Forbidden Interior might be able to think about a vice-governor, though he certainly could not speak to such a person. A messenger shall be sent to learn his will."

A midshipman was sent to report to the commodore. Presently Lieutenant Contee, the flag lieutenant, came up the wardroom ladder wearing his cap instead of a straw hat. The cap had a gold band on it, and a silver anchor surrounded by a wreath. Contee walked to the gangway and stood in full view from the boats.

"The Lord of the Forbidden Interior," announced the interpreter, "has sent a person of sufficient quality to speak with a vice-governor. Let the vice-governor show himself."

A gorgeously attired individual whose robes were a riot of colors stood up in the boat and stared haughtily at Contee.

"Hol!" muttered the quartermaster. "Looks like the Jack of Trumps, so he does!"

Following instructions, Contee called out sharply in English:

"Why has not the governor himself come to pay homage to the Lord of the Forbidden Interior?"

This being translated, the vice-governor did a lot of talking and gesticulating, the gist of which was that he wanted to know why barbarian ships came here with volcanoes

harnessed inside them, belching smoke. He was instructed, he said, to find out all about this.

Some of the other boats were drawing closer to the ship.

"Tell them to sheer off," ordered Franklin. "Tell them the Lord of the Forbidden Interior is becoming angry at their lack of respect for his wishes."

The boats stopped when this was translated, then one of them began moving again, two men crouching down using short boards as paddles.

"Three blasts on the whistle, Mr. Hawley," Franklin said.

Steam shot skyward from the whistle attached to the steam pipe just forward of the *Susquehanna's* funnel. A thunderous roar echoed three times across the bay and back from the surrounding hills.

The vice-governor almost fell overboard. He just managed to recover his balance and his dignity, and began yelling in apparent rage at the boatmen, who hastily rowed back to their former positions.

He then addressed himself again to Contee, in a tone which held some measure of respectful courtesy. Interpreted, he was saying that his superior, the governor of Uruga, had not understood the high dignity of the Lord of the Forbidden Interior, or he would have come to welcome him in person. What might the vice-governor have the honor of telling the governor as to the purpose of this visit?

He was promptly informed, by Contee in English interpreted into Japanese by Mr. Williams, that the Lord of the Forbidden Interior had come to deliver a letter which the President of the United States had written to the Emperor of Japan. This letter must be delivered in person. The vice-governor tried to say that all communications must come through the Dutch at Nagasaki, but he wasn't allowed to finish. Go away and send the governor, with whom an officer of higher rank will speak, he was told. He went, visibly impressed.

All that night beacon fires burned on every hilltop around the bay and a great bell tolled. Several times boats approached the ship, but were warned off. With early morning came the governor, even more splendidly dressed than his deputy. After some exchange of words, the accommodation ladder was lowered, and Franklin Buchanan—wearing his “undress” blue frock coat with shoulder straps, white trousers and blue cap (with a wider band of gold lace than Contee’s)—stood at the entry port to welcome the governor aboard.

“I’ll have a sergeant and four marines with fixed bayonets at the head of the ladder, Mr. Godon,” Franklin ordered. “Only the governor himself and one unarmed interpreter may come up the side.”

A number of sword-armed retainers were trying to follow the governor. The sight of the bayonets and the resolute faces of the marines checked this small invasion. The governor, his face carefully composed in a mask of Oriental indifference, bowed very slightly to Buchanan.

“Please say, Mr. Williams,” Franklin began, “that as a great concession, and through the desire of the Lord of the Forbidden Interior to show proper courtesy even to minor officials, I have been permitted to receive the governor. Through me, the Lord of the Forbidden Interior wishes to make clear his unalterable purpose to deliver the letter of the President of the United States to the Emperor in person, to whom the President has addressed it. Not to the Dutch, who are mere tradespeople quite unfitted to handle such exalted communications. And not at Nagasaki, which is inconveniently far away, but at Yedo, where the Emperor has his official residence.”

Franklin didn’t know it then, but this was a mistake. The Emperor or Mikado lived at Kyoto at this time, while the actual ruler of Japan was a war lord known as the Shogun, who had his seat at Yedo—the name by which the present city of Tokyo was then called.



The governor started to reply, but Franklin waved him to silence.

"No discussion is possible," he said in his sternest tone. "All that remains is obedience to the will of the Lord of the Forbidden Interior. Unless arrangements for his journey to Yedo and the delivery of the letter into the Emperor's own hand under conditions of proper ceremony are made at once, the Lord of the Forbidden Interior will steam up Yedo Bay with his squadron and deliver the letter anyway, even though he has to fight his way into the Emperor's presence. He intends to perform the duty with which he has been intrusted, whatever the consequences."

The governor appeared profoundly shaken when this was translated to him. Later it was learned that he had been ordered to prevent the "barbarians" from coming to Yedo at all costs. He would certainly have had to commit hara-kiri—a particularly painful form of suicide—had they done so.

He managed, however, to maintain an air of arrogance as he replied.

"He wonders," reported Williams, "or says he does, whether there really is a letter addressed to the Emperor. He wants to see it."

"Tell him I doubt whether he can be granted such a distinction, but I'll inquire," Franklin answered.

He went down the cabin ladder, kept the governor waiting for fifteen minutes, and at last came back carrying a rectangular object in a wrapper of scarlet silk. Carefully turning back the wrapping, he showed the governor a beautiful flat rosewood box about a foot long, with lock, hinges and mountings of solid gold.

"The letter," he explained, "is in this box. I am permitted, as a special mark of condescension, to show you the box. It cannot, of course, be opened in your presence, since your rank is insufficient for so signal an honor."

The governor bowed, much lower than before. He begged

that he might have three days of grace to ask for instructions from Yedo. This being granted he inquired if fresh fruit or vegetables would be "useful" to the Lord of the Forbidden Interior. "Acceptable," corrected Franklin, suppressing his satisfaction—every captain in those days of salt provisions was constantly anxious to get fresh fruit and vegetables for his men to prevent scurvy. And fresh water, of course? pursued the governor. Not for these ships, answered Franklin. We make fresh water from sea water by taking the salt out of it. The governor's eyes bulged. Franklin smiled politely and ushered the governor to the ladder. He didn't think the governor would be much enlightened if he tried to explain how the *Susquehanna's* condenser did that little trick.

Anyway the governor was trying to be friendly, or at least he was acting as though he thought it wiser to appear friendly. That was a good sign. Just to keep him on his toes, the *Mississippi* steamed a few miles up Yedo Bay—into which Uruga Bay opened—took soundings and charted the channel.

Three days later, the governor's gilt-trimmed barge came off again to the *Susquehanna*. Again Franklin received the governor on the quarter-deck; Captain Adams of the *Mississippi* was there too. The governor announced that it was quite impossible for the Lord of the Forbidden Interior to go to Yedo. However, a person of very high rank indeed—the governor bowed three times at the mere mention of this dignitary—was being sent down from Yedo to receive the letter. "A special house will be built at Nagasaki for the ceremony."

"Not at Nagasaki," said Franklin. "Here. That is, when my exalted superior is satisfied that the rank of this emissary is sufficiently high. If so, there is the barest possibility that the Lord of the Forbidden Interior will consent to deliver the letter to the emissary instead of to the Emperor in person. It will be necessary for the credentials of the

emissary to be translated into Dutch, setting forth his titles and rank, and the fact that he has been specifically empowered to receive this letter and to convey it to his master. But the ceremony must take place no farther from the imperial city of Yedo than this bay."

The governor looked unhappy, but he agreed, which at once made it perfectly clear to Franklin that he had been told to agree if he could do no better.

"Very well, Mr. Williams. Now ask him who this great emissary is." The governor again bowed three times and produced a rolled-up parchment tied with gold cord. He bowed three times more as he handed it over. Williams read it aloud: it was an imperial rescript authorizing Prince Toda of Idzu, together with Prince Ido of Iwami and three other persons of rank, to represent the Emperor as commissioners, for the purpose of receiving a letter addressed to the Emperor by the exalted ruler of the United States of America.

"Prince Toda of Idzu is described here as Hereditary First Counselor to the throne," observed Williams, "which, if my understanding of the Japanese hierarchy is correct, makes him either the third or the fourth person in importance in the whole country."

"That should be satisfactory," said Buchanan, careful not to let any satisfaction show in his expression. "Inform the governor that this document will be submitted to the Lord of the Forbidden Interior, who may perhaps condescend to scrutinize it personally." There was still a lot of detailed and tedious talking to be done in arranging the details, but the main object had been attained: the letter would be received under circumstances which upheld American prestige.

Perry, of course, made a tremendous show of the ceremony, which took place on the morning of July 14, 1853, on the shore near the village of Kurihama. The weather continued to be stiflingly hot; none of the officers were looking forward to hours of tedious ceremonial all buttoned up in their full-dress uniforms of heavy blue broadcloth.

The evening before the great day, talking over final details with the commodore, Franklin had a sudden idea. "Sir," he said, "it's just occurred to me that the Japanese have yet to see any of us in full dress. Tomorrow for the first time they will see all the commissioned officers turned out in blue full-dress coats, epaulets, cocked hats, swords and sword knots. While there's a difference in the amount of gold lace that you, for instance, will be wearing and the amount that will be worn by any of a couple dozen lieutenants, chief engineers, surgeons and pursers, to say nothing of the Marine officers with their scarlet facings, I'm not sure that differences which are plain as day to us will be plain to the Japanese. In short, sir, they will be getting their first look at the mysterious Lord of the Forbidden Interior, and I think there should be a much greater distinction between your costume and those of the rest of us than is laid down in the uniform regulations of the Navy."

"By the great Jupiter, Buchanan, you've hit on a very important point!" rumbled the commodore. "What do you suggest?"

"I suggest that you alone wear full dress, with all the trimmings, sir," said Franklin, "including epaulets and blue trousers with the one-and-a-half-inch gold stripes down the seams. The rest of us will wear undress blue coats with shoulder straps instead of epaulets, caps instead of cocked hats, and white trousers which have, of course, no stripes. We can leave the coats only partially buttoned, as is the custom aboard ship. We'll be neat, but not showy. There should thus be no difficulty on the part of the Japanese in perceiving who is the man to be honored, and the great distance that exists between our commander and the rest of us."

"That's so," agreed the commodore. "You're quite right. Hrrmph. Of course, you know I'm not one to lord it over my fellow officers, but this is a case of impressing Orientals.

Kindly issue the necessary orders in my name. I'm very grateful to you for thinking of this in time."

"Aye aye, sir," said Franklin, and went to do as he had been told.

He hadn't called special attention to the fact that most of the officers with the squadron had undress coats of thin blue "summer cloth" so that on the whole they would be quite comfortable. The commodore wouldn't, but tough Old Bruin didn't mind a little sweat when he could make such a brave show. Franklin hoped Perry wouldn't take too much notice of the cheers with which the order was presently greeted in *Susquehanna's* wardroom, which was right under the flag-cabin.

On the morning of the fourteenth, the commodore's escort—150 marines under Brevet Major Zeilin, and 200 carefully picked and drilled seamen—were the first to land. Commander Franklin Buchanan was in charge of the whole escort. When he leaped from the bow of his boat to the sandy beach, he became the first American who ever landed in the Empire of Japan on an official mission. He rapidly formed the escort in two double ranks, facing each other, leaving a wide space through which the commodore would advance. The Imperial Commissioners were waiting, Franklin was told, in a beautifully decorated pavilion which had been specially built for the ceremony.

Hardly had the marines and sailors of the escort taken their places when the roar of cannon announced that the commodore was entering his barge to leave the flagship. This was a full-dress occasion, all the ships of the squadron fired the thirteen-gun salute which was the commodore's due. Slowly his barge rowed ashore, escorted on either flank by the gilded barges of the Governor and Vice-Governor of Uraga. The commodore, sitting in the stern sheets of his barge, was shaded by a red-white-and-blue awning, beneath which he was scarcely visible from shore. Other boats carried

the bandsmen of the two frigates, brassily sounding off with "Columbia, the Gem of the Ocean."

When the commodore's barge came alongside the temporary landing stage which had been constructed on the beach, the awning was drawn aside and the commodore for the first time could clearly be seen by the Japanese who crowded behind the rigid ranks of the escort, and by the lesser officials on the veranda of the official pavilion. The Imperial Commissioners had not yet shown themselves. Commodore Perry rose and stepped majestically ashore, pausing while the two seamen who bore aloft the Stars and Stripes and his broad pennant took their places several steps in front of him. These were followed by two well-scrubbed ship's boys, each carrying a scarlet-wrapped box, which contained the commodore's official credentials and the President's letter. Two huge Negroes, armed with drawn cutlasses, guarded the commodore on either side.

This procession being duly arranged, the commodore gave the order to march, and the parade advanced toward the pavilion in slow time to the music of the bands. The escort presented arms; the officers of the squadron not on duty with the escort followed the commodore in ordered ranks, four abreast. Franklin was amused to note the sweat which poured down the commodore's ruddy face now that he was exposed to the full heat of the sun; but the commodore ignored this discomfort, marching on in the heavy splendor of his full-dress uniform buttoned right up to his neck. As he approached the pavilion, the junior Japanese officials drew aside respectfully, bowing. Out came the two Princes, splendidly robed, followed by the three other commissioners.

Williams, sedate in black, stepped forward to interpret. By some instinctive magic, commodore and commissioners contrived to bow at the same time, neither losing face. With much elaboration, the boxes were opened, credentials and letter duly presented and received. As the President's letter

was handed over, the band played "The Star-Spangled Banner"—not yet officially recognized as the national anthem, but quite generally used as such. The escort presented arms again, and the ceremony was over, except for the commodore's announcement that he would return in the spring for an answer to President Fillmore's letter. Franklin wondered what the Japanese would think if they knew that Millard Fillmore was now a private citizen, having been succeeded as President on March 4 of that year 1853 by Franklin Pierce.

So was accomplished, by brassbound audacity supported by brilliant improvisation, the mission of establishing official United States contact with the Empire of Japan. That evening in the *Susquehanna's* flag cabin, the senior officers of the squadron lifted their glasses in admiring congratulation to their commodore as Franklin Buchanan cried: "Well done, sir, splendidly done!" American naval officers of a future generation might question whether the opening of Japan to modern civilization had turned out to be an unmingled blessing, but to the proudly beaming commodore and his admiring officers, those events still lay hidden behind the veil of the future. It had been a great day.

A SENSE OF TRIUMPH AND FULFILLMENT REMAINED WITH Franklin Buchanan during all the time—something over a year—that he was still to remain in Asiatic waters. Protection of American interests in China took up much of this time. He returned to Japan with Perry in February and March, 1854, for the formal signing of a treaty which opened two Japanese ports to American trade and provided for the protection of our shipwrecked seamen. Later he was the first American naval officer to take a steam warship up the Yangtze River.

In September, 1854, the *Susquehanna* sailed for home, arriving at San Francisco on November 11 after calling at Japanese and Hawaiian ports. The commandant of the newly established Navy yard at Mare Island, Commander David G. Farragut, came aboard to pay an official call, and warmly congratulated Franklin on the fine appearance of the ship and the high state of discipline among the crew—the more remarkable since they were more than a year overdue for discharge. From San Francisco, Franklin took *Susquehanna* around Cape Horn into the Atlantic, and arrived at the Philadelphia Navy Yard on March 10, 1855. Granted leave, he was soon home with his family at The Rest—and very happy to be there.

But now reality overtook him. Shadows gathered—shadows



that clouded not just Franklin Buchanan's future, but the future of all his countrymen. The deep division between North and South on the question of slavery had grown during his years in the Far East. The old Whig party was being pushed aside by the Republicans, devoted to the extinction of slavery. Men of moderate opinion were being forced by circumstances to choose sides. Franklin was shocked at the violent opinions expressed by some of his Maryland friends. He refused to believe their prophecies that the Southern states would secede from the Union. No, never that; a way would be found that would preserve the Republic, one and indivisible.

Trying to push these political problems into the background of his mind, Franklin turned his attention to the affairs of the Navy. He visited the Naval Academy, where Commander Louis M. Goldsborough was now superintendent. The four-year term was working out well; the old type of midshipman was disappearing from the Navy, to be replaced by Academy graduates. Franklin was made happy by Goldsborough's hearty words of praise and thanks for the sound Buchanan foundations on which he was building. Goldsborough was enthusiastic, too, about the new steam frigates which were under construction—huge ships, much larger than *Susquehanna*, and driven by screw propellers rather than paddle wheels. This left plenty of room for broadside guns; the new frigates had forty-four guns apiece to the *Susquehanna*'s ten.

There were six of these big frigates, Franklin learned. Like their paddle-wheel predecessors, they were named after rivers—*Wabash*, *Colorado*, *Roanoke*, *Niagara*, *Minnesota* and *Merrimack*. There was also talk of a building program for screw-driven sloops-of-war next year. The Navy was getting into the steam age.

But the Navy had troubles, too. In June, Franklin was ordered as one of fifteen members of a special board to select officers for retirement—the first time Congress had ever au-

thorized such a thing. Up to then, an officer once commissioned could remain on the active list until he died of old age, or from some other cause. All promotion being by seniority, the advancement of capable officers was blocked by a mass of senile old men at the top of the Navy List, unable to perform any duty except to draw their pay.

The Board was well chosen; Franklin Buchanan, Commodores Perry and Shubrick, Captain Stribling and Commander Du Pont were among the members. Fearlessly they slashed the Navy List, recommending 49 entirely useless officers to be dropped from the rolls and 152 others placed on the new retired list. When the report was published, there was a howl of outraged indignation. Congress, besieged by petitions from the ousted officers and their friends, ran for cover. About a third of the officers affected were restored to active duty, and some members of the Board found themselves in official disfavor for having stirred up such a row. Several, whose promotions became due when the list was cleared of so many of the unfit, found their promotions delayed for months. Franklin Buchanan, one of a long list of commanders promoted to captain as of September 14, 1855, did not get his commission until the fall of 1856. Also he was left on "waiting orders" until April, 1859, when he was ordered to the Naval Academy for temporary duty, and immediately thereafter was appointed Commandant of the Washington Navy Yard.

He would have liked to refuse. He regarded assignment to Washington, now become a hotbed of intrigue and political turmoil, with little less than horror. But after four years of inaction, an order to active duty was irresistible. The neglect of the Department was not unconnected with the rancor of many former friends who felt themselves injured by the actions of the Efficiency Board, Franklin knew: the injustice cut deep, deeper perhaps than he realized. Four years in the social climate of the Eastern Shore, where the

sympathies of many of his friends were passionately Southern, had had their effect too; it would be worse in Washington. But Nancy and the older girls urged him to accept—he would be near home, and his daughter Nannie, now 18, was a little dreamy-eyed about Second Lieutenant Julius Meiere of the Marine Corps, who might be in Washington before long. So to Washington Franklin went, to take up his quarters in the Commandant's House at the Navy yard on the bank of the Potomac River.

At first things were not as bad as he had feared. The executive officer of the yard, Commander McBlair, was a Marylander and an old friend; Commander Dahlgren, the blond Norseman in charge of the yard's ordnance department and experimental center, Franklin had long admired for his genius as an inventor and designer of naval artillery. There were many social obligations for the commandant, including affairs at the White House where President James Buchanan—no close kin of Franklin's—was praying only for the end of his term and relief from the frightful responsibility for the debacle which he foresaw and knew not how to forestall.

On October 17, 1859, came a rumble of thunder before the storm. A carriage clattered into the yard, a panting clerk dashed into Franklin's office with an order from Secretary of the Navy Toucey: "Six thousand rounds of small arms ammunition will be made ready for immediate issue to the Commandant of the Marine Corps." Having transmitted the order to Dahlgren, Franklin extracted the reason for it from the excited clerk. The previous night an Abolitionist fanatic named John Brown, well known for his violent activities in Kansas, had seized the U. S. Arsenal at Harper's Ferry, Virginia, fifty-five miles west of Washington on the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad, and just across the river from Maryland. He was reported to be planning to arm the slaves in the neighborhood and lead a slave insurrection. Ninety

marines from the nearby Marine Barracks were preparing to entrain for Harper's Ferry, with Colonel Robert E. Lee of the Army in charge of operations.

Franklin found himself shaking with fury at hearing this news. Why, these Abolitionist villains were carrying fire and sword to the very border of his beloved state! He almost cried aloud: "I'll go too!" But that was impulse, and unnecessary. The marines could handle the job and they did. Brown and his band were captured the next morning. Franklin's temper was edgy for days afterward. What next? What next?

That temper of his was no longer as firmly under control as it had been for so long. He was getting on to sixty now and beginning to look his age. The lines in his wind-toughened face were deepening, the tendency of the corners of his mouth to draw downward was increasing with the years. A sense of impending calamity gnawed at his heart.

He should have been content. After forty-five years of honorable—and lately of distinguished—service, he had reached the highest permanent rank in the Navy: for the title of "commodore" was only an honorary one for captains commanding squadrons, and Congress had consistently refused to create admirals for the Navy, holding this to be somehow undemocratic. Captain Buchanan should have been happily looking forward to one final cruise as commodore, to the joy of seeing his own broad pennant hoisted and the command of a squadron; and then to well-earned retirement at The Rest with his beloved family. He tried to tell himself that this was what the future held for him. He could not quite make himself believe it.

Came 1860, an election year, ominous with portent. Commodore Tattnall came home in May from the command of the East Indies squadron, bringing the first Japanese diplomatic envoys ever to be sent to the United States. Franklin held a reception for them at the Navy Yard and tried to

recapture the old mood of glorious accomplishment with which he had left Japan.

Five days later the wires bore the news that the Republican convention in Chicago had nominated Abraham Lincoln of Illinois—a dedicated opponent of slavery—as the party's candidate for President. Instantly the Southern newspapers blazed with threats of secession if Lincoln should be elected. Sober men, North and South, raised their voices for peaceful compromise: let not the Union be divided. With these sentiments, Franklin Buchanan agreed with all his heart.

November arrived, and Abraham Lincoln became President-elect. On December 20, the legislature of South Carolina passed an ordinance of secession: other Southern states seemed sure to follow. In Washington, Southern sympathizers swore that Lincoln should never be inaugurated. There were reports of secret military companies drilling, of plots to seize the arsenal, the National Guard armories and the Navy yard to obtain arms and ammunition. The danger that the capital might be captured by secessionists before March 4, the inauguration date, was very real, for save the hundred-odd marines at the Barracks, there were no Federal troops in the city. On January 8, Franklin Buchanan drew up instructions for the defense of the yard, of which these sentences express the spirit: "This yard shall not be surrendered. . . . In the event of an attack I shall require all officers and men under my command to defend it to the last extremity, and should we be overpowered by numbers, the armory and magazine must be blown up." Meanwhile brave old General Winfield Scott—himself a Virginian, but uncompromising in his allegiance to the Union—hastily ordered every available unit of the Regular Army to Washington, and enlisted local militia companies. So protected, the inauguration ceremonies were undisturbed.

Captain Buchanan and his officers duly paid their respects to the new President and to his Secretary of the Navy, crusty

gray-bearded Gideon Welles of Connecticut. On April 3, Miss Nannie Buchanan married her Marine lieutenant, Julius Meiere, in the Commandant's House at the Navy yard. President Lincoln was among the guests. The talk was all of conciliation, of finding a peaceable solution that would save the Union.

But by that time, six more states of the deep South had seceded and had joined together with South Carolina as the Confederate States of America. Other slave-owning states—Virginia, Tennessee, Kentucky, Missouri, Delaware and Franklin's beloved Maryland—were hesitating. In all these latter states, there was much talk of neutrality. But on April 12, the Confederate batteries at Charleston, South Carolina, opened fire on the Federal garrison in Fort Sumter, and on April 15 President Lincoln called for 75,000 volunteers, of which each state was required to furnish its due quota. On April 17, Virginia seceded rather than comply.

Every Southern-born officer wearing a United States uniform was now faced with the terrible question: Shall I support the Union or follow the fortunes of my state? Franklin Buchanan, in agony of spirit, waited to see what Maryland would do. He himself did not believe in the right of secession; but neither did he believe that the Federal government had the right to call on Maryland or any other state to provide troops to invade other states which had determined to leave the Union.

Geography denied Maryland much time for hesitation. There were still only some twelve hundred Federal troops in the city of Washington. With Virginia seceding, the capital was in hourly danger. Northern troops must be brought into the city quickly, and they could only come through Maryland—specifically, through Franklin's native city of Baltimore where three main railroads centered. Governor Hicks of Maryland had answered President Lincoln's call for troops by summoning four regiments to be used, he specified, not to invade any other state but solely for the defense of Mary-

land and the national capital. Hot-blooded Maryland secessionists, of whom there were plenty, denounced his action furiously, and swore that no Northern regiments should pass through Baltimore on their way to Washington.

At the Washington Navy Yard, Franklin Buchanan complied, tight-lipped, with orders from Secretary Welles to dispatch ships, men and munitions to help protect the Navy yard at Norfolk, Virginia, against expected attack, and to bring to a place of safety the great steam frigate *Merrimack* which lay there without a crew after the completion of repairs to her hull and engines.

On Friday, April 19, President Lincoln proclaimed a naval blockade of the coasts of the seceded states. Every Navy yard under Federal control would now be humming with activity to build up and support this tremendous undertaking. This was an act of coercion; Franklin believed it morally wrong and practically insane—it would precipitate civil war, which might be avoided by conciliation. Yet he would have to bear an active and vigorous part in preparing and supporting the blockade if he stayed at his post.

He was pacing his office floor, trying to determine where his true duty lay, when he heard racing footsteps in the hall. Commander McBlair, himself a Maryland man, burst into the room, gasping with rage and excitement: "There's been a massacre in Baltimore, sir!" he cried. "Yankee militia are slaughtering our people in the streets!"

He thrust a handful of blue tissue messages at the horrified Franklin. They were fragmentary but frightful. Massachusetts and Pennsylvania volunteers being transferred from one Baltimore railroad station to another, en route to Washington, had fired on the townspeople—hundreds reported killed or wounded, the streets of Baltimore were running with Maryland blood.

"By the living God!" thundered Franklin Buchanan. "McBlair, I'm going to Baltimore to help defend our state against these vile vagabonds!"

He flung himself into a chair, grabbed a pen and scrawled his resignation as an officer of the United States Navy on the first piece of paper he could lay hands on. He was hardly able to see what he was writing through the red mist of his fury. But deep in his heart, underneath the flame, he knew a sense of profound relief. The doubting time was over. Maryland would secede now and take her stand beside Virginia and her sister states of the Southland. There could no longer be any doubt where the path of duty lay for her devoted sons.

He was not able to see Secretary Welles to deliver his resignation in person—as he considered fit and proper—until Monday, the twenty-second of April. He handed in his resignation, was coldly informed by Mr. Welles that it would be duly considered; meanwhile he was relieved of his command and directed to turn over the Navy yard to Commander Dahlgren. He obeyed that order, the last he would ever receive from the Navy Department of the United States, and departed next day with a high heart. First he would see his wife and family safe at The Rest, then he would draw sword and throw away the scabbard until the defiling foot of the last invader should have been driven from the soil of the Free State of Maryland!

Thus felt Franklin Buchanan in his hour of exaltation. He had flung away the honors and emoluments earned by forty-five years of faithful service to follow the stern call of duty. Gladly, proudly would he lay that sacrifice on the altar of his native state.

Alas, alas for exaltation and proud sacrifice! His native state would not have the gifts he offered so freely—he and many another of her sons.

The legislature of Maryland met at Frederick—Annapolis being occupied by Federal troops—on April 27. There were hot speeches and loud talk; but a week or two later the legislature adjourned, having done nothing more than pass a series of more or less ill-tempered resolutions. The governor



thereupon called into service the four regiments he had promised, and sent them off, bands playing, to join the Union army. Maryland's decision was made; Maryland would remain in the Union.

As these events began to unfold, Franklin Buchanan was at first hotly incredulous, then angrily bewildered, and finally appalled. To many Marylanders who could not accept the verdict, the solution was simple: go South and join the Confederate forces. Those Maryland-born Navy officers who took this course, however, were mostly younger men than Franklin. Marylanders of Franklin's generation in the Navy stood by the Union almost to a man: Captains Nicholson, Gardner, Dornin, Mercer, Purviance, Ringgold. Franklin heard of or from them all. His dear friend Captain Charles Lowndes came to The Rest to announce the same decision, and to beg Franklin to reconsider his resignation. "It hasn't been acted on; you offered it under a misconception. Withdraw it while you can, or you'll regret it the rest of your life!" Lowndes implored. His cousin Will McKean wrote in the same vein: "I've been offered a commodore's pennant in the Gulf," he said, "and you should have one too."

These pleas Franklin resisted; he had made his unhappy bed, he would lie in it. But it was with tears in his eyes that he read the letter that came from his brother McKean, now inspector of provisions at the Boston Navy Yard: "I must stay with the old Flag that I have served so long. I pray our Lord to guide you to do likewise."

Thus persuaded and besought, Franklin examined his conscience. He could not fight to compel the Southern states to submit, for he believed this to be both wrong and illegal; but if he could be allowed to continue in service, surely his past record entitled him to ask for sea duty in the Far East or the Pacific, where American interests would still need the presence of the Navy. So he humbled himself, and wrote to Secretary Welles asking that his resignation be recalled, saying that the circumstances which had caused him to tender

it no longer existed. Back in three days came Secretary Welles' answer, curt and to the point: "By direction of the President, your name has been stricken from the rolls of the Navy." So he was not even allowed honorably to resign—he was kicked out in disgrace.

Now the iron entered into the soul of Franklin Buchanan. He felt betrayed by his state, outraged by his country. For a little while he sat and brooded on these bitter wrongs. But he was no man to brood long or to suffer outrage meekly. There was a war going on—a war which Franklin was now coming to view as a war between right and wrong. Or at least a war between partway wrong and wholly, damnably, villainously wrong. Early in September, 1861, came the news that the Confederate forts at Hatteras Inlet had been overwhelmed and taken on August 29 by the Union ships of the Atlantic Blockading Squadron under Flag Officer Stringham. Franklin's old ship the *Susquehanna* had borne a major share in the fight.

There was a regular "underground" maintaining traffic back and forth between Maryland and Virginia; Franklin knew a dozen men who had a hand in it. Next day, having transferred all his personal property to three of his daughters and his son, Franklin Buchanan bade his loved ones a stern farewell. He crossed the Potomac River at night, reached Fredericksburg next day and caught a train for Richmond. At the Confederate Navy Department he was received with open arms.

His commission as Captain in the Navy of the Confederate States of America was dated September 5, 1861, just twelve days before his sixty-first birthday.

## 12      The Battle of the Ironclads

“ENEMY’S IN SIGHT, SIR!”

Flag Officer Franklin Buchanan of the Confederate States Navy, standing alert and watchful on the iron grating which formed a sort of roof for the armored casemate of the big ram *Virginia*, didn’t need Lieutenant Minor’s excited hail to inform him of that fact.

There they were, spread out before his eyes on the broad waters of Hampton Roads—the ships of the Union Navy’s blockading squadron, with the Stars and Stripes fluttering from every spanker-gaff in the noonday sun. He had steeled himself against this moment. Even so, it came hard to hear the word “enemy” applied to ships which flew the flag he had served faithfully for more than forty years. He blinked his eyes; for an instant something blurred his vision.

But he had had his bad time the night before, he had fought the inner battle all over again, and settled it. He believed with all his heart and with his clear-thinking mind as well that to restore peace, a peace that should never have been broken, might in the end heal the wounds of war and bring about the reunion of the nation. And to break the blockade might indeed be a long step toward peace, even if not immediately decisive.

Peace would mean that men of good will on both sides could, after a time, get together and find new ways of living

with each other. He had tried to say something like this to Nancy before he had left Maryland. He was not sure that she agreed with him, but as always she had simply said: "Franklin dear, you must do whatever you think is right."

Franklin Buchanan was doing what he thought was right, here and now.

He put his powerful marine glasses to his eyes for a closer look at the Union ships. Far to his right, lying off Fort Monroe, were two big steam frigates, *Roanoke* and *Minnesota*, sisters once of this *Merrimack* which he now commanded as the C.S.S. *Virginia*. No one would guess it today, looking at their towering spars against the sky and comparing them with the low-lying iron-plated shape, almost like a barn roof floating on the tide, of the armored ram. With the two frigates was a sailing frigate, the *St. Lawrence*, and several small steam gunboats. Right in front of him, and much nearer, straight across the Roads, near Newport News, two more sailing ships lay at anchor: the sloop-of-war *Cumberland* and the frigate *Congress*.

Franklin had already decided his plan of action. He would make straight for these two nearby ships and put them out of action before the big steam frigates could get within range. Then he could deal with the latter one at a time, which was the only way they could get at him. The ship channel through Hampton Roads wasn't wide enough for big ships to maneuver freely without danger of running aground. That was something Franklin had to keep in mind, too; his *Virginia* needed deep water as badly as her former sisters. Also she steered clumsily; it took a lot of backing and filling for her to make a right-angled change of direction, much less to come all the way about. Finally, her engines were unreliable; they had been in bad shape to begin with, and the Confederacy's lack of machine shops and skilled mechanics had hampered repairs. The best Chief Engineer Ramsay could say of them was that they would run some of the time and

quit when they felt like it. All of which added up to the fact that Franklin had better get the job before him over and done with as quickly as he could.

The signal yards of all the Union ships were alive with colored bunting now. Smoke was rising from the *Minnesota's* funnel. Across the Roads, a bugle sounded faintly, the *Cumberland* and *Congress* were beginning to clear for action.

"Steer for those two ships, Mr. Jones," Franklin ordered his executive officer. He choked back one bit of knowledge he had learned two days ago—his brother McKean was now paymaster on the *Congress*, the wooden frigate against which Franklin was hurling the armored power of his mighty ship. He had said nothing of this to any of his officers. Dear Lord, whispered a small prayer in his heart, watch over my brother this day, for I must do my duty with no thought for him.

"Hadn't you better take your place in the pilothouse where you'll be behind armor, sir?" suggested Flag Lieutenant Minor.

"Can't see well enough through those narrow eye slits," Franklin answered. "I'll stand here on the ladder, with my head and shoulders just above the hatchway. That'll give me reasonable protection and I can see what's happening. You stand just below me to pass my orders to the helmsman and the officers on the gun deck."

Now he was coming within range of the two Union ships.

"The *Cumberland's* your target, Mr. Simms," he called to the officer at the forward pivot-gun. "Open fire when you're ready."

Instantly the seven-inch Brooke rifle roared. The *Virginia* shuddered as the heavy gun slammed back in recoil.

Franklin's glasses were fixed on the *Cumberland*. There was a bright flash and a vast cloud of powder smoke as the shell burst on her quarter-deck. From the *Congress*, now just abeam, came the rolling thunder of her full broadside

of twenty-five guns. The *Virginia's* casemate was filled with metallic clangor as though twenty-five giant hammers were battering at her armor.

"Lookit them cannon balls!" yelled a voice. "Bouncin' off us like they was peas from a kid's pea-shooter!"

"Git yo' fool head out o' that gunport, or it'll be bouncin' too!" somebody retorted.

"No sign of any damage, sir," called Lieutenant Jones. "Ready, after division! Fire!"

Again the shuddering crash of gunfire and recoil.

"Full speed, Mr. Jones," Franklin roared. "Pilot, steer straight for the *Cumberland*. Collision quarters! Prepare to ram!"

Now was the moment to try out the iron beak that projected, under water, four feet beyond the *Virginia's* prow.

*Cumberland's* broadside guns were firing steadily and accurately. Shells were exploding against *Virginia's* armor, fragments whining through the sunshine. But shells, like the solid shot of the *Congress'* thirty-two-pounders, could do little harm to an armored ship.

Now! With a tremendous splintering crash the *Virginia's* beak drove deep into the hull of the *Cumberland*, well below the waterline. The *Cumberland* reeled under the frightful shock. Yards and small spars came crashing down as her upper masts gave way. The *Virginia* hung there with her beak sunk deep in her enemy's side. As the weight of the sinking *Cumberland* bore on her, her bow was being carried deeper—

"Full astern!" shouted Franklin. "Engines, don't fail me now." Shaking and groaning from stem to stern under the drag of the reversed propeller, the *Virginia* hung fast for one more frightful second, then began to go astern. A strip of foam-churned water, littered with wreckage, widened between the two ships.

Lieutenant Minor, the flag lieutenant, clinging to the ladder beside Franklin, shouted with delight. "Look, sir!

Look at the hole in her! You could drive a horse and cart into it!"

"Instead of which, half the water in Hampton Roads is pouring into it; she'll be gone in ten minutes," said Franklin. And we'd've gone with her if we'd stuck there much longer, he thought to himself.

The guns of the sinking *Cumberland* roared defiance; her flag was still flying. The *Virginia's* guns answered.

"Don't waste ammunition on her, Mr. Jones," Franklin sang out tartly. "She's done for. Stand down to the *Congress*, if you please."

"*Congress* is making sail, sir," came the word from below, passed from the lookout aft.

"We'll have to head up-river to get room to turn, Flag Officer," Minor reminded.

Franklin nodded grimly. The last thing he wanted now was to waste time in maneuvering his clumsy ship. He looked over at the *Congress*—she was moving, under jib and fore topsail. Beyond her, there was plenty of smoke up the Roads: one of the steam-frigates, the *Minnesota*, was coming slowly toward the fighting. Well astern of her, two little steamers were towing along her sister ship *Roanoke* and the sailing frigate *St. Lawrence*. *Roanoke* must have engine trouble.

The pilot was backing and going ahead in a series of maneuvers, working the big ironclad slowly around so she would eventually be headed for the *Congress*. Two little gunboats of the James River flotilla, *Teaser* and *Jamestown*, passed close inshore, slam-banging away with their guns at the Federal shore batteries near Newport News. A third and larger steamer of this flotilla, the *Patrick Henry*, was some distance astern, surrounded by a cloud of steam.

"I'm afraid she's got a shot through her boilers, sir," Minor remarked.

"She'll have to look after herself," Franklin answered impatiently. "Blast that pilot! Is he going to take all day coming about?"

He ran down the ladder and forward to the ladder leading up to the little pilothouse. Pilot Parrish was at the wheel, with another pilot handling the engine signals.

"How much longer before you'll have me headed for the *Congress*, Mr. Parrish?" Franklin demanded.

"I'm doing my best, Commodore. These are tricky waters," the pilot answered. There was a touch of sullen resentment in his voice. The members of the Virginia Pilots' Association were civilians of very independent views, not accustomed to being hectored by the Navy's "brass."

"Look sharp about it," barked Franklin. "Two Yankee frigates are on the way down, and I want to dispose of *Congress* before they get here." He went back to his observation post in the spar-deck hatchway, gritting his teeth.

His watch told him it was a quarter of three. Visibility was still perfect. The *Minnesota* was still nosing along—no, she seemed to have stopped. There were signal flags in her rigging; a little steamer was running down to her from the *Roanoke*, which was much farther away.

"I think she's aground, sir," said Minor.

"By Jupiter, I hope so!" Franklin clapped his glasses to his eyes. "Yes—you're right! She's churning up mud astern trying to back off! If she just sticks there till we've finished with *Congress*, she's a dead duck! Signal the James River gunboats to take her under fire at long range and cause her all the trouble they can, Mr. Minor!"

"Aye aye, sir."

The *Cumberland* was almost under water. One last defiant shot from her pivot gun roared out as she went down. The shell burst against the *Virginia's* armor. *Congress* was moving very slowly, and *Virginia's* head was pointing almost in the right direction. One more stern-bell and she would be ready to head in for the kill.

Franklin was almost dancing with impatience on the iron ladder step. Then came the welcome hail: "Pilot reports all clear to steer for the enemy, sir!"



"Full speed—open fire as soon as you're within range, Mr. Jones!" No. He would NOT allow himself to think about McKean. Every minute counted now. Get this done, and get on to the *Minnesota* before she drags herself off that mudbank, and before *Roanoke* is within range. One by one, that's the way to do this piece of work.

Two of the *Virginia's* forward guns cut loose at *Congress*. Franklin thought he saw one hit on her quarter; as he adjusted his glasses for sharper vision, he saw the *Congress* swerve inshore and lose way. Her captain, mindful of the fate of the *Cumberland*, had run her aground where the *Virginia's* terrible ram could not get at her.

"But our guns can!" snarled Franklin.

"Report of damages, sir," announced Lieutenant Jones from the gun deck. "Number three and number five guns, muzzles shot off; port shutters of both those guns and number seven are jammed, can't be closed. We're taking some water for'd; carpenter thinks the ram was carried away when we hit the *Cumberland*. Steam exhaust pipes shot away, smokestack damaged. Chief engineer reports he's having trouble keeping a full head of steam."

"Very well, Mr. Jones. Get that leak for'd stopped."

So the dying *Cumberland* had made her teeth felt, after all. She had fought to the bitter end; her colors were still flying from the mast that protruded above the water where she had gone down. Franklin could not beat down the swell of pride in the "old Navy" that choked him for a moment: that flag had never floated over a ship more gallantly fought.

But the fact that *Cumberland* had done as much injury to *Virginia* as she had made it all the more imperative that he attack *Minnesota* while she was still aground and unable to maneuver. She carried more than twice *Cumberland's* weight of metal in modern ordnance; so did *Roanoke*. And *Virginia* might have lost her most formidable weapon, her giant iron beak for ramming.

His guns were slamming away vigorously at *Congress* as the ironclad closed in relentlessly.

"Enemy's on fire, sir!" Minor cried. Yes—smoke was climbing upward from the stern of the grounded frigate; her return fire was slackening. Through the thunder and crash of the guns and the exploding shells, Franklin heard the sharp crack of a rifled cannon and saw his two armed tugs, *Beaufort* and *Raleigh*, coming up to help.

"Pour it on her, Mr. Jones. Make an end!" he yelled.

He could not know, but he could guess, what was happening aboard *Congress*. He did know that she was commanded by Lieutenant J. B. Smith, one of his Annapolis lads of the '41 date—as were several of his own officers—and Smith was making a desperate fight of it. What part his brother McKean was bearing in that fight he didn't want to think about. Long afterward McKean told him that he had volunteered to take charge of the powder division and had kept the ammunition going up through the scuttles to the guns until Smith had been killed and the executive officer, seeing no hope that help could reach him, surrendered the ship.

That was what happened now, as Franklin watched.

Down into the smoke fluttered the colors of the *Congress*. Up in their place climbed the white flag of surrender.

"Cease firing!" shouted Franklin. He grabbed a speaking trumpet from Minor, hailed the *Beaufort* which was less than fifty yards to port of the *Virginia*.

"Go in and take possession of that ship, Mr. Parker!" he shouted. "Bring the officers back as prisoners, let the crew land, and set her afire fore and aft. Look lively about it!"

"Aye aye, sir!" came the answering hail. *Beaufort* forged ahead, was soon alongside the *Congress*; the *Teaser* stood by to lend a hand if needed. Now if McKean were just among those prisoners, alive and well . . . Then, as the smoke of battle cleared, there was a roar of gunfire and musketry from the shore. Union troops there, either not seeing or not caring

that the white flag was flying over the *Congress*, had opened up on the two little gunboats. *Beaufort* sheered off from the stranded frigate.

Hot rage welled up in Franklin's innards. To his mind, this was treachery.

"That ship must be burned, Mr. Minor," he shouted. "She's on fire already, but the flames aren't making much headway. I'll not leave her to be reclaimed by the Yankees."

"I'll take a boat and burn her, sir," Minor volunteered, and ran aft, yelling to the *Teaser* to send a boat alongside.

Franklin was out of the hatchway now, standing on the iron-grated deck where he could see more clearly what was going on. One glance he spared for the *Minnesota*: she was still aground, thank Heaven. Back came his anxious gaze to the *Teaser's* boat, which, with Minor and several of the *Virginia's* men aboard, was pulling briskly toward the *Congress*. The firing from the shore had slackened, though stray bullets were whispering over the ironclad's deck or smacking against her armor.

Now the boat was only fifty yards from the *Congress*. *Teaser*, following, was ready to cover the boat with her guns if necessary.

Suddenly the shoreline blazed with renewed gunfire. The water around the boat leaped with the impact of bullets and grapeshot. Franklin saw Minor stand up in the stern sheets of the boat, waving the oarsmen on; then the brave flag lieutenant collapsed as a bullet struck him.

"Burn that damned ship, Mr. Jones!" roared Franklin, possessed by a fury which would not be restrained. "Give her red-hot shot! She's firing into our boat under her flag of surrender! Oh, the villains, the treacherous villains!"

He snatched a Sharp's rifle from a nearby marine and fired at the *Congress*. As he tried to reload the weapon, shaking so with rage that he could hardly manipulate the breech-block, he felt a heavy blow on his right thigh. His leg buckled under him, he fell sprawling on the iron-grated deck.

"The flag officer's hit!" yelled a voice.

"I'm all right," rasped Franklin, trying to get up. He couldn't make his right leg do its duty—he didn't seem to have any right leg. For one awful instant he thought it had been taken off by a cannon shot. No, it was still there, but numb from the hip down. Blood soaked the gray cloth of his trousers.

"Steady, sir," said the calm voice of Surgeon Phillips. "Just lie back and let me have a look."

The pain was coming now, great throbs of agony.

Lieutenant Jones' arm was under his shoulders, propping him in a half-sitting position as the doctor slit his trouser leg, took one look at the pumping blood that jetted from the wounded thigh and called sharply for a tourniquet and stretcher-bearers.

"Patch me up, Doctor," Franklin ordered. "I've got work to do."

"You'll do no more today, sir," Phillips told him. "If that bullet hasn't pierced the femoral artery, it's God's mercy. You'll lie perfectly still till we get you ashore to a hospital, or you'll be a dead man."

He finished tightening the tourniquet around Franklin's thigh.

"Ease the flag officer over on the stretcher and take him below where he'll be behind armor," he ordered the stretcher-bearers.

Franklin tried to protest. He couldn't make the words come with any snap; he was suddenly weak and dizzy.

"Take command, Mr. Jones," he choked out. "Finish off the *Congress*—*Minnesota* next—before she gets afloat—"

"Aye aye, sir!" Jones' voice seemed to come from very far away.

They were lifting him now. "Easy does it going down the ladder!" Phillips warned. The firing was slackening again, though the ship shuddered periodically as her own guns hurled red-hot shot into the doomed *Congress*. Franklin was

just barely conscious of the anxious voices and faces of the *Virginia's* crew as they crowded to the foot of the ladder.

"I'm all right, men," he said, forcing a touch of firmness into his tone. "Just a bullet in my leg. Carry on—sink 'em all!"

The casemate echoed with cheers as they ran back to their guns.

Franklin felt himself blacking out. That last effort had been too much for him. . . .

He woke to the thunder of gunfire and the clangorous shock of cannon balls striking the *Virginia's* armor. He woke also to agony—Surgeon Phillips was loosening the tourniquet, the pain of returning circulation in his leg was exquisite torment. The slant of the sun through the open gunports told him the day was far gone.

"Water, sir?" Lieutenant Minor was holding a pannikin to his lips. He gulped greedily.

"Are you all right, Mr. Minor?" he asked.

"Shoulder broken by a grapeshot, sir. Nothing serious," Minor answered. "How is it with you, sir?"

"Well enough. The *Minnesota*—we've engaged with her?"

"At long range, sir. Well over a mile. Pilots say if we get closer we'll go aground."

"Blast the pilots! Tell Mr. Jones—" His voice failed.

"Sir?" Minor bent over him. Franklin tried to speak again, but the shadows descended as he strove to utter the words that would not come, "Tell Mr. Jones to arrest the pilots if he has to. He *must* engage *Minnesota* at close quarters before it gets dark and the tide goes out."

Those words remained unspoken.

When he woke again he could see the stars above him in the dark canopy of the night sky. He was lying on a cot on the spar deck. No throb of engines—the ship was not moving. From below came the bang-bang of hammers on iron.

"Mr. Jones!" His mind was still on the order he had not been able to utter.

"Minor here, sir," said his flag lieutenant from the starlit gloom. "Shall I call Mr. Jones?"

"Yes—no, wait. Where are we now?"

"At anchor off Sewell's Point."

"The *Minnesota*? What happened?"

"We drew off from her at dusk, sir. The pilots said with the tide falling it was dangerous to stay longer in the north channel."

Somewhere a red glow was flickering fitfully. Franklin tried to lift his head, couldn't quite manage it.

"That wouldn't be *Minnesota* burning?" he demanded.

"No, sir. It's *Congress*. She's been afire for hours. *Minnesota*'s knocked about a little, but she's not hurt much. She's still hard and fast in the mud, though. We'll finish her off in the morning."

Franklin groaned, not because Phillips was tightening the tourniquet again, but in agony of soul for the lost opportunity. He did not need to be told that every tug available to the Federals was laboring right this minute to drag *Minnesota* into deep water. By morning, whatever was wrong with *Roanoke*'s engines might be patched up too (he couldn't know she had a broken propeller shaft). Tomorrow he might have to fight them both together, whereas this afternoon, this golden afternoon, he might have destroyed them separately if he'd had a little more time.

"I'll have a canvas chair rigged in the starboard hatchway for'd, Mr. Minor," he directed. "I'll handle the ship from there in tomorrow's fight."

"Aye aye, sir."

"There," said Surgeon Phillips, giving a last touch to the fastenings of the tourniquet on Franklin's leg. "That'll do for a bit. How do you feel otherwise, Flag Officer?"

"Impatient," grunted Franklin.

"Natural enough," Phillips observed. "Better take this, and sleep for a bit." Meekly Franklin swallowed a bitterish potion.

To the northward, just as he downed the last drop, the stars were suddenly blotted out by a mighty burst of flame, and an instant later the long rolling thunder of an explosion came across the waters.

"*Congress* blew up, sir!" cried Minor. "The fire got to her magazine at last."

"The rest of that miserable squadron will go the same way tomorrow," snarled Franklin Buchanan. In that stern anticipation, he presently fell asleep.

When he woke again, he knew instantly that something was very wrong. The sun was shining through a tall window, shining on whitewashed walls. He lay in a bed, he could see the bedposts. Windows, walls, bed— He struggled to sit up.

A figure in a white jacket materialized from somewhere, pushed him gently back on the pillows. "Please, sir. Lie still. The doctor'll be here in a jiffy."

"Where the devil am I?" Franklin demanded. His voice wasn't as strong as he would have liked.

"Naval Hospital, sir. You'll be—"

"By whose hell-blasted orders was I brought here?" Franklin interrupted.

"Please, sir, listen while I explain." This was Lieutenant Minor, in uniform with his arm in a sling, hurrying across the room. "Doctor Phillips insisted that you be sent here. He told Mr. Jones that it would cost you your life to go out with the ship today. Mr. Jones said you'd never forgive him—"

"And I won't!" cut in Franklin.

"—but, sir, he said the life of Franklin Buchanan was worth more to the Southern cause than destroying a dozen Yankee frigates. He said to tell you he'll do his best."

"Of course, that confounded dose the sawbones gave me had something in it to keep me asleep," rumbled Franklin.

"I suppose so, sir."

Far away, there was a sound like a man beating an empty barrel with a mallet. Gunfire.

"The *Virginia's* in action, and I'm lying here." Franklin blinked. Two large tears rolled down his weathered cheeks.

All that long forenoon, he lay there and listened to the distant firing. Sometimes it was steady and continuous, but there were long intervals of silence broken by only an occasional shot or two.

He burned to know how the battle was going, but Minor wasn't allowed to leave the hospital to find out, and the doctors—they were attentive and skillful enough—said only that there was no news yet, that he must give all his thoughts to keeping calm and letting his wound heal as soon as possible. As the day advanced the pain grew worse.

Finally he heard cheering outside. The hospital fronted directly on the ship channel of the Elizabeth River, leading up to the Navy yard.

Was the *Virginia* returning, bedecked with flags of victory?

"Mr. Minor! Get me Mr. Minor!" Franklin croaked.

The hospital orderly went out, returned to say that Mr. Minor was in bed by the doctor's orders.

The cheering died away presently. An hour dragged by, and then another. Then at last there were footsteps in the hall, a knock on the door. It was Lieutenant Catesby Jones and with him Lieutenant Wood. Neither of them looked happy.

"I came as soon as I'd secured the ship alongside at the Navy yard and sent off a short report to Richmond by wire, sir," Jones reported. "I fear you won't be pleased with me."

"What happened?" Franklin rumbled.

"What happened was a miserable little Yankee ironclad," Jones told him, "twice as handy as we were and drawing half as much water. She must have arrived during the night, worse luck."

Franklin groaned.

In crisp sailor's words, Jones went on with his story. The *Virginia* had left Sewell's Point on the morning tide, heading



for the *Minnesota*, which was still aground. Thereupon the little *Monitor* had appeared, and with her two eleven-inch guns in their revolving turret, her greater handiness and her shallow draft, had simply fought the big clumsy *Virginia* to a standoff. Finally, with the tide ebbing, the pilots had told Jones he would be high and dry if he stayed out in the Roads any longer, and the chief engineer had reported the engines were likely to fail.

"So," wound up Jones sadly, "I returned to Sewell's Point and came up to the Navy yard to repair damages. I never did get a fair chance at the *Minnesota*, the wretched little iron-clad kept me so busy."

"You did all a man could do, Mr. Jones," said Franklin, choking back his bitter disappointment. "It was the fortune of war. We'll fix her up and finish the job properly in a day or so."

"They're tremendously excited about all this in Richmond, sir," Jones told him.

"I suppose so," Franklin said. "It'll be a little while before I can write out a complete report. Meanwhile I'll be glad if you'll get Mr. Wood here off to Richmond on the night train. He can give the Secretary a full verbal account of both days' fighting."

There was more talk, mostly of repairs needed by *Virginia*. Then they departed, leaving Franklin Buchanan alone with his might-have-beens.

It was his fault. If he hadn't let his temper get the best of him and come out on the open deck to fire personally at the *Congress*, he wouldn't have been wounded. In that case he would have at least finished off *Minnesota* yesterday afternoon, and maybe done something about *Roanoke* and *St. Lawrence* as well, pilots or no pilots. But that opportunity he had thrown away because he had not kept his grip on his temper.

And in wartime, opportunities rarely returned next day in the same form. As luck would have it, the Yankee *Monitor*

had arrived during the night, and as might have been anticipated, she was commanded by an officer of skill and determination. So the blockade of Hampton Roads had not been raised, and now—Franklin knew in his inmost heart—it was unlikely to be raised at all. The North Atlantic Blockading Squadron would not be caught napping again. And in time there would be more “Monitors.” The industry of the North could build as many as they needed, now that this one had been proven. The South could only limp along behind, trying to patch up ironclads out of river steamers and that sort of rubbish.

In lonely anguish, Franklin Buchanan turned his face to the pillow and whispered: “Mother, Mother, why didn’t I heed your counsel when I needed it most?”

Three days later came Lieutenant Wood back from Richmond, beaming. “Sir, you’ll receive the thanks of Congress for your great victory, and you’re to be made Admiral—the first Admiral of the Confederate States Navy!”

He must have wondered why his revered commander-in-chief didn’t seem more excited.

# 13

## The Last Fight

ADMIRAL FRANKLIN BUCHANAN OF THE CONFEDERATE STATES Navy had plenty of time, recovering from his wound in the piney-woods air of the North Carolina hills, to think out what he hoped to do next.

The bitterness of lost opportunity that afternoon in Hampton Roads did not leave him; not again would such a chance come to him, or any Southern naval officer. The blockade grew stronger as fresh ships poured out of the Northern shipyards. The South would never again have so powerful an ironclad as the *Virginia*, which Franklin's friend Commodore Tattnall had to blow up in the James River when the Union army recaptured the Norfolk Navy Yard, the sad fact being that the big ship simply had no other place to go. Yet it was not in Franklin's nature to admit that nothing more could be done, that the war was lost.

He wrote many letters—to the Secretary of the Navy, to friends in the service on duty at Charleston and Savannah and Mobile. A plan began to grow in his mind as the answers came in.

He had to admit, as he weighed the odds, that his old friends who were now his official enemies were doing very well indeed. Samuel F. Du Pont had taken Port Royal, South Carolina, and the Florida ports; Louis Goldsborough's gunboats ruled the North Carolina sounds; and in the Gulf of

Mexico, David G. Farragut had stormed past the New Orleans forts with a squadron of wooden sloops-of-war and captured the South's greatest seaport. But, Franklin told himself, with determination and a little luck, the tide might yet be turned.

So, in this time of enforced quiet, he worked and wrote and planned.

Of all the letters which came to him, the most precious, of course, were the few that trickled through from Nancy and his children. Mail service between North and South wasn't at all regular; letters could be months in getting through, if they got through at all. Yet during much of the war, letters—and people—did get back and forth between Maryland and Virginia, either by way of Chesapeake Bay or by night across the Potomac River.

All were well at home, Nancy wrote. Daughter Nannie was pining for her Lieutenant Meiere, who had "gone South" as Franklin had and was now in the Confederate Marine Corps. The other twin, Ellen, had married in June and was living in Baltimore. Young Franklin, now fifteen, was also in Baltimore and doing well at school; only one letter from him got through, though he mentioned having written several others. He had no special bent for the sea, which his father had once thought about unhappily. Now Franklin senior was rather glad; the last thing he wanted was for the boy to get any overheated notions about trying to join him. The two youngest girls, Rosa and Mary—there were nine Buchanan children all told, eight girls and a boy—were doing their lessons at home, Nancy said, and like the other Buchanan girls were "red hot little Rebels." Franklin had to be careful how he answered these letters, which he did only through friends in the Navy Department in Richmond who were in a position to make sure that the letters didn't fall into the wrong hands.

For even on the eastern shore of Maryland there were bitter feelings now which were growing worse as the war

months passed. Families were divided—including Nancy's, her much-loved elder sister Sally being married to a Union officer. Nancy didn't say so in plain words, but Franklin gathered that she was deeply distressed and that among her Union friends there was growing up much hard feeling about Franklin being a Confederate admiral.

Passionately Franklin longed for the restoration of peace, told himself that what he was planning was the one hope that this might happen. For without some great and dramatic reversal of fortune, his hard common sense informed him that the war was lost, that the South just did not have the resources to win it; and if, after years of bloody sacrifice, it ended in a Union victory, there would be no telling to what lengths, by that time, the victors might go in taking vengeance on "rebels" and "traitors," or what miseries might follow.

He did not quite realize to what extent this viewpoint was breeding bitterness in his own heart against those whom he regarded as the authors of this war, a war which, in Franklin's view, ought never to have been started.

As he grew stronger, he was called to Richmond to preside over a general court-martial which tried Commodore Tattnall for blowing up the *Virginia* and acquitted him on the clear ground that he had done the only thing possible to prevent her from being captured. Tattnall was nevertheless cruelly hurt by the malicious attacks made on him in the newspapers. Hoping to comfort his friend, Franklin wrote to Secretary Mallory urging that since Tattnall had been so much his senior in the "old Navy," he should be made an admiral too, and have his name appear ahead of Franklin's on the Navy List. This wasn't done, but Tattnall found out about Franklin's chivalrous gesture somehow and was deeply grateful.

Franklin also found time to drum up support for starting a Confederate Naval Academy organized on the Annapolis model. Lieutenant William H. Parker, C.S.N., who had served

as head of the seamanship department at Annapolis, was willing to take charge of the new school. Franklin, urging the need for a Naval Academy even in the midst of war, pointed with justifiable pride to the rich dividends which the Union Navy was reaping from the original Academy, which had been temporarily moved to Newport, Rhode Island, and was hard at work trying to supply the tremendous demand of the expanding fleet for junior officers.

"Without the Naval Academy, they could never have organized their confounded blockade so fast," Franklin insisted. "If we don't start training our youngsters properly, we'll never break the blockade." His warning was heeded, but red tape and lack of resources delayed the opening of the Confederate Naval Academy until 1863.

More and more, meanwhile, Franklin was concentrating on his great plan, which was nothing less than to build, not one ironclad, but a whole ironclad fleet in the sheltered waters of Mobile Bay in Alabama, and use it to recapture New Orleans! The fame of such a victory would ring around the world, might even bring about at long last the foreign intervention on which, as 1862 dragged on, Southern hopes were more and more staked.

In August, 1862, Admiral Buchanan, limping a little, but full of iron determination, was ordered to Mobile to take command of the naval forces in that area and push on the construction of four ironclads which were being built along the rivers that converged into Mobile Bay.

Then began for Franklin the torture of the fabled Tantalus, who was condemned by the ancient gods to stand up to his neck in water, which receded from him whenever he tried to drink. He had his ironclads, but he could not get them finished. Guns, armor plate, skilled workmen were lacking.

The year 1863 dragged on into 1864, and his ships were still not ready. The largest of them, the ram *Tennessee*, was not launched at Selma until February, 1864; and about this

time the very able Confederate intelligence service began to bring Admiral Buchanan disquieting reports that Admiral Farragut was getting ready for an attack on Mobile Bay and was only waiting for the arrival of four monitors that had been promised him for the job. Time was running out. Franklin had to make the hard choice of concentrating on the *Tennessee* alone the pitiful trickles of guns, armor plate and trained workmen that were all he could obtain, so that he might have at least one ironclad ship ready when the blow fell.

Grimly he persevered, his temper giving way more and more often under the strain. He went across the Bay now and then to Fort Morgan, where he could observe the blockading ships. His growing bitterness is well illustrated by a letter he wrote about this time to Tattnall: "My old ship *Susquehanna* is here on the blockade. It would give me the deepest delight to go out and destroy her."

But even when, at last, the *Tennessee* was finished, she proved too slow to catch any seagoing ship that she could not approach unawares. Her curse was the universal curse of all Confederate ironclads—weak, unreliable engines.

Otherwise, she was a remarkably good ship to have been built as she was out of pine timber that had been growing in Alabama forests only a couple of months before she took to the water. She was not as large as the *Virginia*; her armored casemate was only about half as long (seventy-eight feet). Its sides were built of twenty-four inches of pine timber backed with four inches of oak. Iron armor six inches thick plated the front of the casemate, with five inches on the sides. She had six rifled guns; one on a pivot mount at each end of the casemate, and two on each side on broadside mounts. Her iron ram was solidly built into the structure of the ship, so that it was unlikely to be broken off as *Virginia's* had been.

But her engines were sadly inadequate. At the very best, they gave her a speed of six knots. Breakdowns were frequent. What was perhaps almost as great a weakness, the

chain cables that operated the rudder were fully exposed on the *Tennessee's* afterdeck.

Such as she was, she was ready now to meet the gathering storm, and the storm clouds grew ever darker as the Union fleet gathered off Mobile Bay. On May 18, 1864, there had been only one large warship and half a dozen gunboats. By June 1 there were six big ones and twice that many gunboats, with Farragut's square blue flag in plain sight at the mizzenmast of the sloop-of-war *Hartford*. No monitors yet; but intelligence said they were on the way.

Desperately Franklin begged for the iron, the guns, the men he needed to complete his ironclad squadron. With all four of his ironclads, Franklin would have met anything Farragut could bring against him with full confidence. With only one, backed by nothing more formidable than three paddle-wheel wooden gunboats, he would have to fight with the courage of despair. He had no illusions about the forts being able to keep the Union squadron from entering Mobile Bay. Farragut himself had proven at New Orleans that steam warships could pass forts without suffering fatal damage.

The defenses of Mobile Bay did have one new weapon. That weapon was the underwater mine, then called the torpedo. The development of these torpedoes by Southern officers was a striking example of how much resourceful minds can accomplish with very little in the way of material resources. Essentially the torpedoes used at Mobile were just very large tin cans or wooden kegs filled with gunpowder, anchored so that they would be four feet under water at low tide, and provided with a triggering device that was supposed to set off the powder when a ship's hull came into contact with the torpedo. Nearly two hundred of them had been planted in the ship channel between Fort Morgan and Fort Gaines, at the entrance of Mobile Bay; however, a part of the channel was left open to allow blockade-runners to enter. Also many of the torpedoes were leaky, so that they were no longer dangerous.



Weighing the chances, Admiral Franklin Buchanan had no doubt that if Admiral David Farragut was determined to break into Mobile Bay, he could do it. The best Franklin could hope for—the very best—would be that the forts and the torpedoes between them might do enough damage to the passing ships so that the *Tennessee* would have a fighting chance when the enemy got inside the bay. Whether or not Farragut had monitors with him might be the deciding factor. Franklin had an uneasy notion that his opponent wouldn't make the attempt until he did have at least a couple of monitors, and also that these were likely to arrive before Franklin could balance the odds by completing any of his three unfinished ironclads.

On July 18 this notion was confirmed. At dawn Fort Morgan reported that a monitor was in sight. Intelligence identified her as the *Manhattan*, armed with two monster fifteen-inch guns. Two more monitors showed up outside the Bay on August 3—the *Chickasaw* and *Winnebago*. These were double-turreted ships with four eleven-inch guns apiece. On August 4, the *Tecumseh*, a sister of *Manhattan*, appeared. The North's superior industrial resources had won the race: Farragut had four ironclads while Buchanan still had only one that was fit to fight.

Franklin Buchanan's estimate of the military character of his opponent was that Farragut would waste no time once he was fully ready. He wasn't disappointed.

The morning of August 5, 1864, dawned bright and clear. Almost with the first light, a messenger came clattering down the *Tennessee's* cabin ladder: "Admiral, sir, the officer of the watch reports the enemy's fleet is underway and standing in to attack!"

Franklin hurried up to the top of the casemate. The *Tennessee* was lying at anchor just inside the channel entrance, to the northward of Fort Morgan. The whole ship channel was in plain sight. Once again Franklin Buchanan's fighting blood pumped faster through his veins at what he saw there.

The Union fleet was coming ahead in two columns.

To the eastward, on Franklin's left as he faced the channel, were the four monitors in single "line ahead," the *Tecumseh* leading. Nearly abreast of the monitors came a double column of wooden ships lashed together in pairs. There were seven pairs altogether, each consisting of one of the larger sloops-of-war with a gunboat or a smaller sloop lashed to her port side. Farragut's idea was immediately clear to Buchanan's experienced mind. He was putting his ironclads closest to Fort Morgan, since they had better powers of resistance; while each of the big wooden sloops-of-war protected a smaller ship from the fort's guns. If either ship of a pair were disabled, the engines of the other would be able to carry both past the fort.

"Get under way, Captain Johnston," Franklin ordered the *Tennessee's* captain. "Steer for the leading ship in that double column. If we can ram her, we'll throw the whole column into confusion."

As he spoke, the roar of gunfire came across the water. The *Tecumseh's* fifteen-inchers were opening fire on Fort Morgan. The battle of Mobile Bay had commenced.

Franklin took careful note of the red buoy which marked the eastward end of the line of underwater torpedoes. The monitors were on a course that would carry them clear of this danger; the wooden ships were going to pass right through the mine field if they held on as they were.

"Signal the gunboats to remain ahead of the enemy's wooden ships and do all the damage they can," he ordered. *Tennessee* was moving now, moving slowly but steadily toward the enemy. If only he had the steam power to maneuver the ironclad at high speed—but he didn't. He must do his best with what he had.

"*Tecumseh's* steering for us, sir," came the warning cry.

"Please, Admiral, don't stand here on the open deck any longer," Commander Johnston begged.

"She's not in range yet," growled Franklin, watching the oncoming monitor through his glasses. She looked very much like the original *Monitor*, which had once been described as "a cheese-box on a raft"—all black iron, flat deck pointed at bow and stern with the round turret in the middle and a smaller round pilothouse on top of the turret. Inside that turret, Franklin knew, were two fifteen-inch guns, each capable of launching a solid iron bolt weighing 440 pounds. These were the most formidable guns afloat in any Navy; far more powerful than the eleven-inch guns of the first *Monitor*. Just three hits by such a gun had smashed in the armor of the ram *Atlanta* last year off Savannah and knocked all the fight out of her. Franklin wasn't at all sure that the *Tennessee's* armor would fare any better if *Tecumseh* got a fair shot at her, especially at close range. And that was exactly what *Tecumseh's* captain intended to do. He had increased speed and was steering straight for the ram.

The other monitors and the leading wooden ships were now hotly engaged with Fort Morgan. The thunder of the guns rolled across the sunlit waters, smoke shot through with flame half hid the Union fleet from sight. But the *Tecumseh* was in plain view.

"Please, sir, take your place in the pilothouse behind armor," Johnston implored once more.

"Wait," snapped Franklin, watching the monitor. She had just passed inside the red buoy that marked the limit of the mine field.

Suddenly a great column of water leaped skyward beside her. She rolled heavily to port, her flat bow dipped beneath the surface.

A yell of triumph rose from the deck of the ram.

"She's struck a torpedo!" shouted Johnston.

Up came the stern of the doomed monitor; her propeller blades, still revolving, gleamed for an instant in the morning sun, then she plunged straight downward and was gone.

Only a spreading circle of foam and a few struggling men who had managed to escape from her iron hull were left to mark her passing.

Instantly Franklin's attention shifted to the column of wooden ships. The leading pair, the sloop-of-war *Brooklyn* with a gunboat lashed alongside, was slowing down, blocking the progress of the column. Just behind her was the *Hartford*, lashed to the gunboat *Metacomet*; Farragut's blue flag fluttered from the *Hartford's* mizzen.

"Full speed—ram the flagship!" yelled Franklin.

It was the moment of opportunity. The *Brooklyn's* captain, shaken by the disaster to the monitor and probably fearing that his own ship might strike a torpedo, was holding up the whole Union column under the guns of Fort Morgan. If the *Tennessee* could drive her iron beak into the *Hartford*, victory might be in the making.

But the *Hartford* was still going ahead, passing the *Brooklyn*. Franklin caught a glimpse of a blue-uniformed figure aloft in her rigging, aglitter with gold lace. He could not know that this was Farragut, shouting his immortal command: "Damn the torpedoes! Full speed ahead!" But he could tell that inspired leadership was overcoming the momentary confusion of the Union fleet, and that his laboring engines were not going to bring him into action in time to prevent the enemy's recovery. At last he allowed the frantic Johnston to urge him down the ladder and forward to the armored security of the pilothouse.

The ram was shuddering now to the crash and recoil of her own guns as she opened fire on the *Hartford*. Through the narrow eye-slits in the pilot house armor, Franklin watched the *Hartford* and her consort as the gap of water between the two ships narrowed—oh, for a knot or two more speed!

Suddenly the *Hartford* swerved, just as the ships were coming together; with a grinding crash the *Tennessee*

smashed into her, but it was only a glancing contact. Guns roared. A gaping hole appeared in the wooden side of the Union flagship, her whole broadside flamed and thundered in reply. Once again, as in Hampton Roads, Franklin heard the clangor of cannon shot rebounding from armor. Then the *Hartford* was gone into the smoke. He knew he could not hope to overtake her.

"Steer for the next ship! Ram! Ram!" he shouted.

*Brooklyn* was next, getting into place astern of *Hartford*. The *Tennessee* could not turn quickly enough to ram her. Another minute would have done it, but the minute was unforgiving. The *Tennessee* passed just under the stern of the big sloop-of-war, firing into her and getting a solid hammering from her after guns in return. Now the ram was well clear of the Union column.

"Close with the next ship!" Franklin ordered.

But again he was too late. He exchanged fire with the *Richmond*, and the *Lackawanna* astern of her, without getting into the right position to use his ram. The following ship was the *Monongahela*, with the screw gunboat *Kennebec* alongside; this pair sheered out of the column and headed straight for the *Tennessee*. Again the crash of a glancing collision. The stout timbers of the ram bore the blow well, and she slid past the Union pair, her gunfire doing great damage to the little *Kennebec*.

"Hard aport!" ordered Franklin, steering between the *Monongahela* and the *Ossipee*, next astern, firing into each. Behind *Ossipee* and her consort came the last pair of the Union column, two rather small ships, *Oneida* and *Galena*. *Oneida* was clearly in trouble; steam was rising from her in a billowing white cloud.

"The fort must've planted a shot in her boiler," Franklin conjectured. "Give her another broadside, then come about and follow her, Captain Johnston. Maybe we can finish her off and the other one too."

The *Galena* was furnishing all the motive power for both ships, which slowed them considerably. *Tennessee* could catch up and ram them, Franklin was sure—

“Monitors on the port bow!” yelled a voice.

And there they were, three squat black little monsters taking form in the smoke that still billowed across the channel.

“We can’t do those fellows much harm,” growled Franklin. “Stand over under the guns of the fort and let’s see where the others have got to.”

It was hard to give up this final chance to damage the enemy, but Franklin was determined to keep his hot blood from leading him into hasty action this time. Besides, it was now 9:30 A.M.; his men had been fighting for three hours in the frightful heat of the ram’s casemate, and they had had no breakfast. Something had to be granted to human endurance.

The ram steered across the channel and slowed down close to Fort Morgan. On the ramparts, gray-clad soldiers cheered her wildly. What for? thought Franklin. We’ve accomplished next to nothing—yet. But we will before we’re through.

“Don’t anchor, Captain Johnston. See the men have something to eat,” he directed then went up on the top of the casemate for a look at the enemy.

The wooden ships of the Union fleet were now safely inside the Bay. The gunboats had been cast off from the big ships to chase the Confederate gunboats. Far up the Bay, the *Selma* was at that moment surrendering to the *Metacomet*; Lieutenant Jouett of the latter was telling his old-time friend Lieutenant Murphey, C.S.N., that he didn’t want his sword but he’d had a bottle of sherry on ice for him for an hour past. The *Gaines* was on fire and being run ashore to save her from capture. The *Morgan* was fleeing to the protection of Fort Morgan’s guns.

As for the monitors, they were making no effort to follow the ram as yet. Franklin correctly estimated that Farragut was now collecting damage and casualty reports and making

up his mind what to do about the *Tennessee*. He munched on a piece of hardtack and sipped lukewarm coffee, as the men of the ram's crew were doing on the after deck. Resolution took form in his mind. Why should he allow his opponent to decide at leisure how to dispose of him?

There were three courses of action he might follow. One was to anchor under the fort's guns and compel Farragut to bring the fight to him. That would end in a losing fight with the monitors, almost surely. Or he could go out of the Bay and attack the Union transports and storeships which were lying off the entrance under guard of several paddle-wheel gunboats. He could do some damage, probably; but they would scatter, and he might not catch more than one or two. Finally, he could attack the Union fleet now, this moment, while it was still in some disorder from damage sustained in passing the forts. In that case he might sink two or three wooden warships. It was his best opportunity to inflict serious injury on the enemy.

He told himself this wasn't just red battle madness. It was a deliberate decision, carefully weighed.

"Orders, sir?" asked Johnston at his elbow.

He gestured toward the huddle of wooden ships. "Follow them up, Johnston," he directed. "We're not going to let them off as easily as all that."

The *Tennessee* was now alone. She had suffered no serious damage to her armor, her guns or her engines. The storm of fire through which she had passed had swept her deck clear of all exterior fittings, including her smokestack, but that was all. As she gathered speed, smoke poured from the hole in the spar-deck gratings where the smokestack had been. The Admiral's flag and her colors were rehoisted on boat hooks fore and aft.

One ship with six guns, she bore down to attack a fleet of seventeen ships mounting 140 guns.

The Union sloops-of-war, some of which had anchored, were beginning to get up their hooks and start moving as

the ram approached. The monitors closed in, but they moved too slowly to intercept the *Tennessee*. Franklin's battle-plan was simple: he meant to ram the first wooden ship he found in front of him, then draw off and ram another.

Farragut was not the man to await attack. The Union ships were now steering straight at the oncoming ram. Higher and higher towered their masts and spars as they closed in upon their foe, and they meant to do some ramming themselves. Here came the *Monongahela*, full speed; she crashed into the ram. The violence of the blow knocked men down in the casemate and flung Franklin heavily against the side of the pilothouse; but the stout framing of the ram was undamaged. The *Lackawanna* slammed into her on the other side, doing more damage to her own bow than to the *Tennessee*.

Then suddenly the whole fabric of the ram shook as though she had been struck by the fabled hammer of Thor, the Viking god of war. Franklin leaped down into the casemate. What was this? Daylight showed through the armor amidships, where a huge mass of splinters had been driven inboard. Half-stunned men were picking themselves up from the deck.

"The *Manhattan*, sir! A fifteen-inch solid shot—" gasped an officer.

"Here comes the *Hartford*!" shouted Johnston from the pilothouse. Franklin staggered again as the Union flagship crashed into the ram. He clambered back into the pilothouse in time to see her sheering off. So close was she that he felt the hot breath of her guns as she loosed her broadside—in vain, her shell-guns could do nothing against armor, but a few more of those fifteen-inchers might tell a different story. Franklin might have felt better if he had known that that shot from the *Manhattan* had so damaged the carriage of the gun that had fired it as to put the gun out of action. He did feel decidedly better to see the *Hartford* and the *Lackawanna* collide. Now perhaps he could get a chance to



ram. It would be hard if he couldn't, so closely were the Union ships crowding around the *Tennessee*. Then he realized that a series of steady and violent blows were hammering away at the stern of the ram, against the after part of the casemate.

He peered through the slits, swearing at the smoke. Flame leaped in the murk, the ram shook from another blow. The smoke cleared a little, and Franklin saw he had more monitor trouble. One of the double-turret monitors, the *Chickasaw*, had taken a position close up to the ram's stern, where only the after pivot gun could be brought to bear on her, and was battering away with her four eleven-inch guns with devilish regularity. The ram didn't seem to be returning this fire. Aft through the casemate stumped Admiral Buchanan. The pivot gun which should have been engaged with the monitor was not firing. The iron shutter over its gunport was closed. Men were hammering and prying at it trying to get it open.

"What's wrong here, Mr. McDermett?"

"Port shutter's jammed fast by a shot, sir."

Crash! Crash! The timbers of the casemate groaned under the impact of two more solid shot.

"Lay below, one of you!" roared Franklin. "Get some engine-room people up here to drive the iron pivot out of that shutter."

Crash! Crash! She wouldn't take much more of this steady pounding. That persistent monitor *must* be driven off.

Four men came running with a heavy punch and sledge-hammers. Two of them braced their backs against the casemate, holding the punch in position. The others swung their hammers.

Crash!

Franklin was flung to the deck half-stunned. Something heavy was lying on top of him. He pushed at it, it rolled aside. He was covered with some warm, sticky substance—

Blood. He was bloody from head to foot.

Nearby someone was groaning.

"Mr. McDermett, what happened—" Franklin could hardly recognize his own voice.

Someone else was speaking in tones that trembled with horror. "Split him wide open . . . shot must've hit right where he was braced against the side . . . have to scrape him off the deck with a shovel . . ."

Franklin Buchanan tried to get up. Agony shot through him. His right leg—he couldn't move!

"Admiral!" A voice he knew, Surgeon Conrad's. "Are you badly hurt? Here—let me help you. I think your leg's broken."

Down in the cockpit, stretched on a mattress and forcing himself to disregard the pain of his broken leg, Franklin managed to piece together the details. The two men who had their backs against the casemate had been, quite literally, disintegrated by the impact of the monitor's solid shot. The torso of one of them had knocked Franklin down. His leg had apparently been broken by one of several fragments of iron and boltheads that had given way under the blows.

"The devils have got me again, Johnston. It's your fight now," Franklin said.

"I'll do my best, sir," the captain answered. "That miserable monitor has shot away our steering cables. We're rigging relieving tackle to steer by."

Up above, the guns were firing less frequently, though the hammering of Union shot against the casemate was incessant. The engine of the ram still throbbed; she was still able to move, still in action.

"Fight her to the last!" snarled Franklin.

"Aye aye, sir."

Johnston was gone. The ram shook to the impact as some Union ship slammed into her. She shook again as the heavy shot of the monitor smashed against her armor.

In a mist of torment—physical and mental—Admiral Franklin Buchanan lay in the lamplit gloom of the cockpit and

waited, listening to the sounds of battle, trying to guess how that battle was going, knowing in his heart only too well how it was going—for the odds were too great.

"Admiral, sir." Johnston again.

"Yes, Captain."

"Relieving tackle's shot away; she can't be steered. All the gun shutters are jammed. We can no longer return the enemy's fire. And that monitor astern, sir—we can't shake her off. She's knocking the after face of our shield into fragments. The whole after end of the casemate is about ready to give way, and when it does she'll make a shambles of our gun deck."

Franklin Buchanan summoned all his fortitude to face what must be done. "Very well," he said. "If there is no hope, we must save the lives of our men who have fought so well. Strike the colors."

Agony claimed him again for a moment. When he could see and think once more, Surgeon Conrad was bending over him. At a little distance, cap in hand, an officer in a blue uniform waited respectfully.

"This gentleman is Lieutenant Giraud of the United States steamer *Ossipee*, Admiral," Surgeon Conrad was saying. "He is under orders to bring your sword to Admiral Farragut."

"It is in my cabin," whispered Franklin Buchanan, and turned away his face.

Fiercely he searched his soul for error. Was it his fault this time? Had he done his best, his very best, with the means at his disposal? Once again words spoken by his mother long ago came back to him: "There are times, son Franklin, when to go on fighting doesn't do any good." Such a time had come to Decatur, bravest of the brave. Now such a time had come also to Franklin Buchanan. And to the doomed cause for which he had fought no less gallantly.

GALLING AS IT WAS TO THE PRIDE OF FRANKLIN BUCHANAN TO be forced to surrender his ship and to find himself a prisoner of war, the indomitable spirit of the old sailor shone brightly in this adversity.

Admiral Farragut, the victor of Mobile Bay, showed his defeated adversary every consideration. Franklin was taken at once from the terrible heat of the ram's iron-plated casemate to the gunboat *Metacomet*, where he was made as comfortable as possible in the cabin of her skipper, Lieutenant Jouett. He was attended by his own surgeon, Dr. Conrad, and by Fleet Surgeon Palmer of Farragut's staff. Farragut sent a flag of truce to General Page in Fort Morgan, asking that the *Metacomet* be allowed to pass the fort for the purpose of taking Buchanan and the other Union and Confederate wounded to the Naval Hospital at Pensacola, a privilege which the chivalrous Page promptly granted.

Meanwhile the surgeons set the admiral's broken leg, and he was much cheered by their assurances that he need not fear amputation. Lieutenant Jouett was another of his old Annapolis lads of the well-remembered '41 date and recalled having heard of the Buchanan love for sea food. He had a fine dish of lobsters prepared for breakfast by the cabin steward. Franklin was able to sit up and enjoy them by that time despite the way the *Metacomet*—a slim-bodied paddle-

wheel gunboat of the type known as "double-enders" because they were designed to operate in either direction—was rolling in the long Gulf of Mexico swells on her way to Pensacola. When he had finished he grinned at Dr. Conrad and remarked:

"I'd like you to convey my thanks and compliments to Lieut. Jouett for those noble lobsters. Tell him that if I'd known what he was going to serve me for breakfast I'd've surrendered two hours sooner than I did so I could have had 'em for supper!"

Franklin Buchanan remained three months at Pensacola Naval Hospital, while his leg mended. In November, 1864, he was sent north in the supply steamer *Fort Morgan*, and confined in Fort Lafayette in New York Harbor. Negotiations for his exchange were already on foot, but were delayed due to the fact that the Confederates had no Union prisoner of equal rank to exchange for him. While in Fort Lafayette he was visited by his wife and daughter Alice, and also by his brother, Paymaster McKean Buchanan, U. S. Navy. A turkey from home made his Christmas merrier, but the best gift of all was news that his exchange was being arranged. He arrived at City Point, Virginia, on March 4, 1865, and reached Richmond next day, immediately applying to Secretary Mallory for active service.

But the time for active service by the South's devoted sons was running out. Grant's army was besieging Petersburg, just south of Richmond; Sherman was coming north through the Carolinas; and the last Southern seaport which blockade runners could use, Wilmington, North Carolina, had been taken by Admiral Porter in February. Franklin Buchanan was ordered back to Alabama, where some Confederate warships were still active near Mobile and in the rivers, but it does not appear that he actually assumed command again. The Confederate naval forces in Alabama waters were surrendered to Rear Admiral Thatcher by Flag Officer Farrand, C.S.N., on May 5, 1865. The officer accepting the surrender

for Admiral Thatcher was Franklin's young friend of Annapolis days, Commander Edward Simpson, Fleet Captain of the West Gulf Blockading Squadron.

Franklin's name does not appear on the long list of officers and men who became prisoners of war at that time. However, he appears to have been aboard the Union flagship *Stockdale* (at Mobile) as a paroled prisoner of war as late as May 25. Shortly afterward he was sent north, stopped for a day or two at Fort Monroe and then went home on parole. The war was over, and so was Franklin Buchanan's long career as a naval officer.

The home in which the old sailor was welcomed joyously by his wife and family was not *The Rest*. That beautiful house had burned to the ground in 1863; Franklin had not learned of this disaster until after the battle of Mobile Bay in 1864. Now the Buchanan family was living at Knightly, a house owned by Mrs. Buchanan's sister, while a new house was being built on the site of *The Rest*.

To the supervision of this work, and the cultivation of the estate—with its gardens, orchards and hay fields—Franklin Buchanan devoted himself with the same tireless energy with which he had served at sea. He was honored as a hero by those of his neighbors of the Eastern Shore who had Southern sympathies, and many of his old shipmates and friends came to visit him from time to time. In 1867, former President Jefferson Davis of the Confederacy was a guest at *The Rest*, now risen in fresh glory from its ashes.

In September of the following year, Franklin's fame as the first superintendent of the Naval Academy brought him the appointment of President of the Maryland Agricultural College. He held this post only a year, resigning because the Board of Trustees insisted on retaining the services of a professor whom the old admiral considered unfit for his post.

In 1870 he tried the insurance business, becoming Secretary and State Manager of the Life Association of America for the state of Alabama. When ill health forced him to return

north, he was offered a like post in his native Maryland, but declined it, feeling that he could no longer give it the energetic attention which he felt was due to his employers.

Now the shadows were gathering. For a time he was still able to direct the estate, but his long and active life had taken its toll.

Early in 1874, a severe cold developed into pneumonia, and on May 11, 1874, surrounded by his family, Admiral Franklin Buchanan breathed his last.

He left behind him a renown which will live in memory as long as men honor brave seamen. Incapable of a mean or selfish act, Franklin Buchanan fought always for what he believed to be the right, did always what he believed to be his duty whatever the cost. His vision and determination contributed largely to the development of our young Navy, and his firm discipline shaped the early years of the United States Naval Academy, where one of the principal thoroughfares bears today the name of Buchanan Road.

He was the first naval officer ever to command an armored warship in battle, and had the industrial resources of the South been able to implement his plans he might well have changed the course of history. Americans of all parts of the nation may now be glad that this did not happen, but nothing can detract from the energy and courage with which Admiral Franklin Buchanan followed the path of his duty as he saw it to the bitter end, fighting to the last in a hopeless cause.

As the harsh memories of the War between the States have given way to happier sentiments, the Navy which Franklin Buchanan served so long and at the last fought against so stoutly has not failed to honor the memory of the gallant sea warrior. On January 2, 1919, the first United States naval vessel to be named in honor of a Confederate officer, the destroyer *Buchanan*, was launched at the Bath Iron Works in Maine. After many years of service in the U. S. Navy, the *Buchanan* was transferred to Britain's Royal Navy in the

famous destroyers-for-bases exchange of 1940. Renamed H.M.S. *Campbelltown*, she served with Atlantic convoys and had several brushes with the German U-boats. Her end came in a desperate operation which was full worthy of the old admiral himself. She was the blockship for the British commando raid on the German-held port of St.-Nazaire in France, March 28, 1942, where she was driven into the lock-entrance of the U-boat harbor and blown up, wreaking great havoc in the port. Her captain, Lieutenant Commander H. S. Beattie, R.N., was awarded the Victoria Cross for gallantry in this action.

A second U. S. destroyer named *Buchanan* was launched in 1941 and took part in many of the battles of the Pacific campaign against Japan, receiving the Presidential Unit Citation and fifteen battle stars. It was on board this ship that General MacArthur embarked en route to board the battleship *Missouri* to receive the Japanese surrender.

Still a third *Buchanan*—a brand-new guided missile destroyer—joined the fleet in the spring of 1962, thus continuing in the U. S. Navy the name of one of its most distinguished officers and one of its most determined foes!



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## **About the Author**

**GEORGE FIELDING ELIOT** was born in Brooklyn, New York, but much of his boyhood was spent in Australia where his father had business interests. During World War I he served with the Australian forces, and returned to the United States after the armistice. For the next ten years he wrote mostly adult fiction, meanwhile serving as an officer in the U. S. Army. In the mid-1930's he began writing articles, newspaper columns and books on military affairs, and since World War II has also been broadcasting for two major radio networks. Major Eliot and his wife live in New York City and spend their summers in Connecticut.









